

# ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

The Situation and Dynamics of the Jewish People

# 2016

# 5776

Strategic Dilemmas

Demographic Challenges in Jerusalem

US Orthodox Community



המכון למדיניות העם היהודי (מיסודה של הסוכנות היהודית לא"י) בע"מ (חל"צ)

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## 5776

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# Foreword

2016 has posed new dilemmas for Israel and the Jewish people. Developments in the Middle East along with trends in the international arena are dividing analysts into two camps: the optimists, who at the moment see great opportunities and positive progress in the situation of Israel and the Jewish people; and the other camp which is greatly concerned by what may unfold once the regional explosions have settled down.

The Annual Assessment continues to be the flagship publication of the Jewish People Policy Institute. This 2016 edition examines trends across five dimensions of Jewish well-being, using a dashboard of indicators to show whether the dynamics in the last year have improved, deteriorated or remain unchanged in each area. In addition to the five gauges for Geopolitics, Bonds between Communities, Identity and Identification, Demography, and Material Resources, this year we initiate a sixth, which refers to knowledge and innovation, based on the common perception that the Jewish people are the "People of the Book."

The findings of the Annual Assessment are presented to the Israeli Cabinet each year, and have

become essential to the budgeting and planning processes for Jewish leaders around the globe.

Like every year, the Assessment begins with the geopolitical situation. Rarely has the picture been so mixed. There are deeply troubling developments all around Israel, with threats to the state system from non-state actors like ISIS and other radical Islamists. These groups threaten stability in the region and Jewish and non-Jewish communities worldwide.

In its immediate neighborhood, Israel is threatened today by the danger of renewed warfare with Gaza, more than 100,000 Hezbollah rockets that now include capabilities of far greater range and accuracy, and Palestinian terror in Israeli cities. And yet at the same time, some of the threats Israel faces have become less immediate. The war in Syria that has produced a humanitarian catastrophe also involves a war between radical Sunni and Shias. Iran and its Hezbollah proxy have suffered serious losses as they seek to preserve the Assad regime and their position in Syria and the conduit it provides to Lebanon. As such, Hezbollah has little interest in a conflict with Israel at this point.

But it is not just that those who are Israel's most determined enemies are preoccupied elsewhere. It is that the landscape of the region itself seems to have shifted more favorably. The leading Sunni Arab states and leaders see Israel as a bulwark against their main threats: Iran and radical Islamists. Presently, Israel's cooperation with the leading Sunni states—both Egypt and Jordan and the Gulf Arabs—is unprecedented. Ironically, that cooperation is driven not only by common threat perceptions but also by shared concerns about America's perceived retrenchment in the region. Fairly or not, both Israel and its Arab neighbors believe that the nuclear deal that the U.S., and the other members of the so-called 5+1 concluded with Iran is facilitating Iran's pursuit of hegemony in the region—and that America is effectively acquiescing to in Iran's growing reach. Still, the absence of any agreement or prospect of progress on the Palestinian question ensures that the cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbors remains discreet and largely invisible.

While the conflict with the Palestinians may not be impeding Israel's growing, if private, cooperation with its Arab neighbors, it is increasingly isolating Israel outside the region. As the Palestinians seek to internationalize the conflict with Israel—and as Israel fails to make its case to the Europeans and others—the threat of delegitimizing the Jewish state is growing on the international stage. Movements like BDS exploit the international rejection of Israeli occupation of Palestinians to disguise their real purpose: the de-legitimization of Israel. BDS is about ending Israel's existence not its occupation of Palestinians. But because BDS focuses on occupation and Israeli settlement

activity in the West Bank, it disguises its real objective. So long as Israel's settlement activity does not appear consistent with a two-state outcome, Israel will find it difficult to blunt the de-legitimization movement—and this is a factor in the new geopolitical reality.

It is also affecting at least part of the triangular relationship of Washington-Jerusalem-American Jewry. Younger and more progressive Jews, especially in the Democratic Party, are being influenced by what they define as objectionable Israeli policies. Palestinians are more successfully presenting themselves as victims. And absent Israeli initiatives that demonstrate tangibly that Israel is seeking a "two states for two peoples" outcome—and it is Palestinians that are resisting any movement toward two states, the trends may continue to worsen.

In this context, we are concerned about the trends that suggest that Israel is becoming a partisan issue. Recent polls in the United States indicate that while over 80 percent of self-identified Republicans are supportive of Israel compared to the Palestinians, among a similar group of Democrats, the figure is only about 50 percent.

At one level, American Jewish engagement with Israel is at an all-time high, in terms of visits, Birthright/Taglit programs, support for pro-Israel groups, and there is healthy growth in the American Orthodox community. But we also detect an opposing trend: the more liberal, Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, and secular parts of the American Jewish community may become more distant as Israel demographically becomes more Orthodox and nationalistic.

While JPPI has not changed its Community Bonds gauge from last year, whether the ties between the two great Jewish communities have strengthened or weakened is an issue to be closely watched.

There is another phenomenon that bears close attention. A generational transition of philanthropists in the United States is leading to a new approach to donations to Jewish causes, as the younger philanthropists tend more to support secular, rather than Jewish and Israeli causes. Many of America's major Jewish federations report that their giving has been flat for several years.

We are also concerned with the impact of the BDS movement on more than a dozen American college campuses. Jewish students and others who would be favorably inclined toward Israel are largely uninformed about the basic facts on the history of Israel's creation as a Jewish state by the United Nations; the Palestinian rejection of substantial peace offers by Prime Ministers Barak and Olmert; the unilateral pull out from Gaza by Prime Minister Sharon, for which Israel received Hamas rockets rather than roses.

There is no justification for the BDS campaign, which includes EU requirements to label products made in the West Bank, to hold up Israel to special opprobrium in the UN Human Rights Council, in contrast to the serial human rights violators from Zimbabwe to Iran. But it is incumbent on Israeli policy-makers to recognize that it is much harder for Israel's friends to fight BDS when policies on the ground are contributing to growing perceptions that a two-state solution may become unreachable. This would consign Israel to either lose its Jewish majority status, if it adopted a one-state solution with equal Palestinian voting rights, or permanent

subjugation of the Palestinians in a way that is inconsistent with what many Jews in the Diaspora believe are time-honored Jewish values.

While economically Israel is a remarkable success story increasingly integrated into the world economy, the location for increased amounts of foreign direct investment from U.S. firms to Chinese companies, diplomatically Israel remains challenged.

It's understood that Israel cannot negotiate with itself, and that current Palestinian leadership is neither willing nor able to come to the table, much less make the necessary compromises for any peace agreement. Nonetheless, it is in Israel's interest to take steps on the ground to provide more living space and more economic development for Palestinians. Israel should take actions that place the onus for inaction on the shoulders of the Palestinians.

Israel has a unique, historic opportunity to more closely align itself with the major moderate Sunni states of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Taking steps toward reconciliation, or at least mutual co-existence with the Palestinians can facilitate this re-alignment. In this regard, recent statements by the Prime Minister and Defense Minister regarding the Arab Peace Initiative are perceived in the Diaspora as positive, tangible steps.

Particularly concerning is growing anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Europe, which has included acts of terror. Much of the violence is caused by unassimilated Muslim youth. There are only one million Jews in Europe, but 15 million Muslims,

a figure likely to double in 30 years. Polls by the EU's own agency of European Jewish attitudes, indicate that some 50 percent say they or people they know have been subject to anti-Semitic harassment; similar percentages say anti-Semitism has grown in the last five years; and some one third are considering leaving.

The new dimension dealing with the condition of the Jewish people as the "People of the Book" will be examining what needs to be done in the fields of education and research to maintain its qualitative edge in an era of Information and Knowledge. There are concerns that Israel's support for its universities and for research and

development is declining. This novel addition to our basic five gauges is yet another example of JPPI's effort to think creatively to ensure a stronger Jewish State of Israel; a stronger Diaspora; and stronger ties between Israel and the United States.

As every year, JPPI's Annual Assessment, captures better than any other document the challenges and opportunities facing the Jewish people, and we believe it plays a unique role in strategic thinking and action-oriented planning for the future.

**Dennis Ross and Stuart Eizenstat**

# **PART 1**

## **Suggested Policy Directions Integrated 'Net' Assessment**



# 2

## Recommended Policy Directions

### Geopolitics

The current geopolitical reality, which leaves Israel with no existential threats at this time, presents a window of opportunity for a new strategic approach. This is a period in which the State of Israel can plan strategically and shape political processes with deep significance to its resilience and future.

Two areas that should receive priority in this regard are:

1. Opening a new page in relations with the United States (given the upcoming administration change and the tensions during Obama's tenure, and the development of threatening trends that could erode the triangular relationship: Washington – Jerusalem – the U.S. Jewish community).
2. Crafting and initiating a diplomatic process that will allow Israel to maintain its Jewish identity and prevent it from becoming a bi-national state.

### Legislative Initiatives Against BDS

Sixteen U.S. states have passed or are close to passing anti-BDS legislation. Thus far, these efforts have been largely successful. We offer the following recommendations moving forward:

1. The success of anti-BDS legislation and its momentum should be utilized to create a new and modern narrative for reinforcing Israel's legitimacy.
2. Continuing legislative efforts should be encouraged, but limited to states where success is expected. In states where such legislation is in doubt, the boomerang effect must be considered.

## American Jewish Orthodoxy

Twenty-seven percent of U.S. Jews under 18 live in Orthodox households, and two-thirds of Orthodox Jews are Haredim. It is critical to engage Haredi Jews with the mainstream Jewish community. They should be persuaded to assume leadership positions and shoulder part of the responsibility for the future of the Jewish people. Both sides must collaborate despite deep divisions, especially in regard to Women and the LGBT community.

**All endeavors should be characterized by mutual respect and every effort should be made to downplay differences and tensions, which are obstacles to cooperation.**

1. The organized Jewish community should approach the spiritual leadership of the Haredi sector for their endorsement of collaborative efforts. The Haredim should be encouraged to assume significant roles in politics, public service, and communal leadership. Internal demographic trends create a real need for the religious community to deal with the challenges faced by the general Jewish community and Israel in addition to specific Haredi concerns.
2. The Haredi sector should be assisted by the broader Jewish community in developing and implementing programs for serious college preparation (with advanced degrees in mind) and for mid-career management training.

## Demography

Strengthen Jerusalem's Jewish majority with measures that can be carried out separately or simultaneously.

1. Implement measures that narrow the balance of internal migration, such as job creation and the availability of affordable housing – especially for younger, recently graduated professionals (in the spirit of the recent June 2, 2016 government decision on the occasion of Jerusalem Day). We also recommend strengthening the image of Jerusalem as a safe, developing, pleasant and safe place to live.

In parallel, the government should take steps to raise and ensure the quality of life of its non-Jewish citizens, especially in East Jerusalem. Non-Jewish Jerusalemites must be better integrated into the city's social, economic, and cultural fabric in order to ensure peace and quiet.

2. Consider redrawing the municipal borders of Jerusalem either westward or eastward:
  - Alternative A: Shifting the border westward by annexing existing Jewish residential areas;
  - Alternative B: Narrowing the current northern and eastern municipal boundaries by moving the security barrier to exclude some Arab neighborhoods and villages on its eastern side. This could be done without altering Israel's sovereign status over these areas. Any unilateral step that would remove tens of thousands of Arab residents from the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem would need to be implemented in a cautious manner,

safeguarding employment status, welfare rights and the ability to maintain connections with relatives who will continue to reside within Jerusalem proper.

## **Material Resources**

Jewish organizations should adopt more uniform reporting and accounting protocols to support accurate aggregation and in order to better understand patterns of Jewish philanthropy and the allocation of funds by Jewish organizations and federations so as to foster improved policy-making.





# 2016 Integrated Net Assessment

## 1. Geopolitics

A series of developments in the past year contributed to an improvement in the geopolitical situation of Israel, even if only in the short term of the next few years. Together with this, gathering clouds are on the horizon that could point the geopolitical gauge in a negative direction in the mid to long range.

Among the positive developments, in the face of worrying security and political challenges, we find:

- Israel is not facing any conventional military threats, as in the past.
- Iran's march to nuclear weapons is blocked and has even been set back for the coming years.
- Hezbollah is exhausting itself in Syria in order to preserve the Assad regime, while Hamas is isolated and weak.
- Security cooperation with Jordan and Egypt is deepening and Egypt is diligently working to stop arms smuggling into Gaza.

- The upcoming change of U.S. administrations affords an opportunity to turn over a new page in relations between the two countries.
- Deepening relations with the Sunni world, which is increasingly open to Israel given the threats from Iran and radical terror groups.
- Increasing momentum in developing economic and strategic relations with Asia's rising powers, especially China and India.
- Leveraging gas reserves for regional relations and influence (Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, and the Palestinians) as well as with countries further away (Russia, China, and India).

Together with this, one cannot ignore the negative factors that threaten Israel's strategic balance and that may eventually become actualized into direct threats. These include.

- The nuclear agreement with Iran was characterized by Israel's prime minister as "a

mistake of historic proportions.” The deal grants legitimacy to Iran as a threshold state and does not prevent it from achieving nuclear weapons in the long-run.

- The nuclear deal raises the possibility that Iran will escalate its regional subversion, and gain greater political, economic, and military power.
- The danger of security deterioration – On the northern front (Hezbollah and Syria) and on the southern front ( Hamas and terror groups in Sinai).
- Palestinian terror - The “lone-wolf intifada continues and further violence could erupt at any time and take different and more virulent forms.
- Continued tensions with the U.S. threaten the triangular relationship: Jerusalem – Washington – U.S. Jewry, and Israel is increasingly a partisan issue in America.
- The erosion of U.S. interest in playing a central role in the Middle East, as others with whom Israel is less comfortable fill the void.
- Continued weakening of the Palestinian Authority until it ceases to function at all, harming security cooperation with Israel, and further complicating an already chaotic succession struggle as Abu Mazen exits the stage.
- The push to alter the diplomatic process between Israel and the Palestinians from bi-

lateral negotiations to multi-lateral ones, or an enforced solution under UN auspices.

- Attempts to degrade Israel's international standing through BDS and de-legitimization campaigns.

## 2. Demography

**2015-16 saw slight changes to the size and demographic trends of the Jewish people worldwide.** We especially note the growth of the Jewish population in Israel (including those of "no religion" covered by the Law of Return) by 130,000 individuals, the growth of immigrants to Israel (a continuation of the trend we observed in the previous two years), and the stability of the high fertility rates of over three children per Jewish woman in Israel. **Therefore, we decided to keep the Demography gauge unchanged from last year.**

## 3. Bonds between Jewish Communities

The following table briefly describes developments in 2015-16 that contributed to strengthening\weakening of bonds between Jewish communities in the world – with an emphasis on Israel-Diaspora bonds.

	Developments Strengthening Bonds	Developments Weakening Bonds
1	Growing fears of anti-Semitism (anti-Israel and anti-Semitic trends appear to be converging) strengthen the sense of shared destiny, and dependability on global Jewish unity.	Anti-Semitic incidents on campuses and elsewhere make public identification with Israel/Jewish causes less appealing.
2	Continued Israeli initiatives to bolster Israel-Diaspora relations (Diaspora Affairs Ministry, GOI Kotel decision etc.)	Israeli policies on many issues still not in line with views of Diaspora communities (mainly in North America) – and vice versa: Diaspora political and cultural sentiments not in line with those of the Israeli public.
3	Growing instability in the Middle East somewhat reduces the level of criticism of Israel’s inability to advance a peace agreement to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians.	Continued criticism aimed at Israel, and clashes between the GOI and other countries’ governments, especially on Israel-Palestine, makes Israel less appealing to young liberal Jews.
4	Continued Israeli excellence in different fields (notably hi-tech) contributes to its positive image among Jews.	Demographic, political, and cultural trends in Israel (highlighted in the 2016 Pew report on Israel) seem alien to many Diaspora Jews.
5	Certain demographic trends in the American Jewish community, among them, the strengthening of the Orthodox community (which has strong ties to Israel), and increasing organization of the large Israeli expat community in America.	Israel as a political football in the upcoming U.S. presidential elections forces Jewish voters to “take sides” “for or against” things Israel represents. This on the heels of a fierce debate last year over the nuclear agreement with Iran, which made Israel a divisive issue within the U.S. Jewish community.

**Jewish bonds in 2015-16 did not dramatically change from the previous year.** Long-term trends recognized in previous years are still in place in the Jewish world and in Israel. In the last year there was a growing worry about the future of Jewish communities because of the rise of anti-Semitic sentiments in several places – a double-edged

sword when it comes to Jewish bonds. On one hand it causes some Jews to lower their “Jewish profile.” On the other hand, it evinces a sense of a shared Jewish destiny and the dependability of Jewish communities to come to each other’s aid. A similar double-edged sword can be found in the way Jews respond to the BDS movement. As

the American Jewish community increasingly polarizes, not all developments can be analyzed in binary terms of increasing or decreasing solidarity. BDS fosters a degree of in-group solidarity for some Jews and alienation for others.

Another phenomenon worth noting is the confusing message that Israel sends to Diaspora communities: it pushes plans and funding aimed at strengthening Israel-Diaspora bonds, yet it doesn't always execute these plans coherently and efficiently. A notable example is the GOI Kotel expansion plan to include an area for non-Orthodox practice, which was approved by the cabinet but halted because of political handwringing.

**As a result, JPPI has kept the Bonds gauge unchanged from last year, slightly above “Maintaining.”**

## 4. Identity and Identification

This year, because of the publication of the *JPPI Pluralism Survey* of Israeli Jews and the Pew Center's report on the attitudes and values of Israelis, *A Religiously Divided Society*, **the identity and identification gauge will focus on Jewish Identity in Israel.**

Our analysis begins with the components of Jewish identity. According to the JPPI survey, three out of four components are especially meaningful – culture, religion, and nationality. Over two thirds of the Israeli Jewish population find these components somewhat or very meaningful. (Less than half found ancestry somewhat or very meaningful.) Among these three leading

components nationality stands out: **55 percent** of the total Jewish population found this component very meaningful, which is significantly more than those who found religion or culture very meaningful (42 and 45 percent).

This finding is also echoed in the Pew Survey. According to Pew, fully 88 percent of Israeli Jews find being Jewish to be a matter of nationality or culture, or religion and nationality or culture. This finding is also consistent with an international survey of 700 Jews connected to organized Jewish life conducted as part of the 2016 JPPI Global Dialogue Process. In that survey 69 percent gave a high score of 4 or 5 (on a 1 to 5 scale) to peoplehood/nationality as a primary component of Jewishness; 68 percent scored culture similarly.

The Pew Report also indicates the strength of Jewish identity among Israeli Jews:

88 percent said they had a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish People

93 percent said they are proud to be Jewish

90 percent said being Jewish is at least somewhat important to them.

**We believe that the strength of Jewish identity and Jewish identification in Israel** (where over 40 percent of the world Jewish population reside, and which has the highest birthrates - among non-intermarried families - and a rapidly growing population) **more than compensates for the reported decline in Jewish identification in the United States. As a result we are moving the needle slightly to the right in the direction of Prospering.**

## 5. Material Resources

### Positive Factors

- Israel's economy continues to follow a moderate course of growth, lower than in the recent past but still avoiding the devastating troughs that appeared elsewhere in the developed economies.
- Indicators of Arab and Haredi participation in Israel's work force and in skill training are modestly increasing.
- Issues ranging from educational access, differentials in wealth, shares and pricing of mineral resources, and regulation and protection in domestic markets have become topics of active policy discussion.

### Negative Factors

- In the U.S., indicators of generational change possibly leading to large changes in philanthropy toward Jewish causes and Israel.
- From data reported by the Bank of Israel, it emerges that the growth of the economy slowed in the past year, among other reasons, because of limits to the supply of trained personnel in the hi-tech sector. According to the report, it is quite possible that this limited supply was among the causes of the decline of Israeli exports.
- Israel's housing crunch puts a squeeze on the young and those in the lower and middle portions of the income distribution, with effects going beyond issues of housing alone.

### Setting the gauge for this year's Annual Assessment: Unchanged

#### **Within Israel, the balance of sources of wealth and its uses for domestic and Jewish people purposes remains unchanged from last year.**

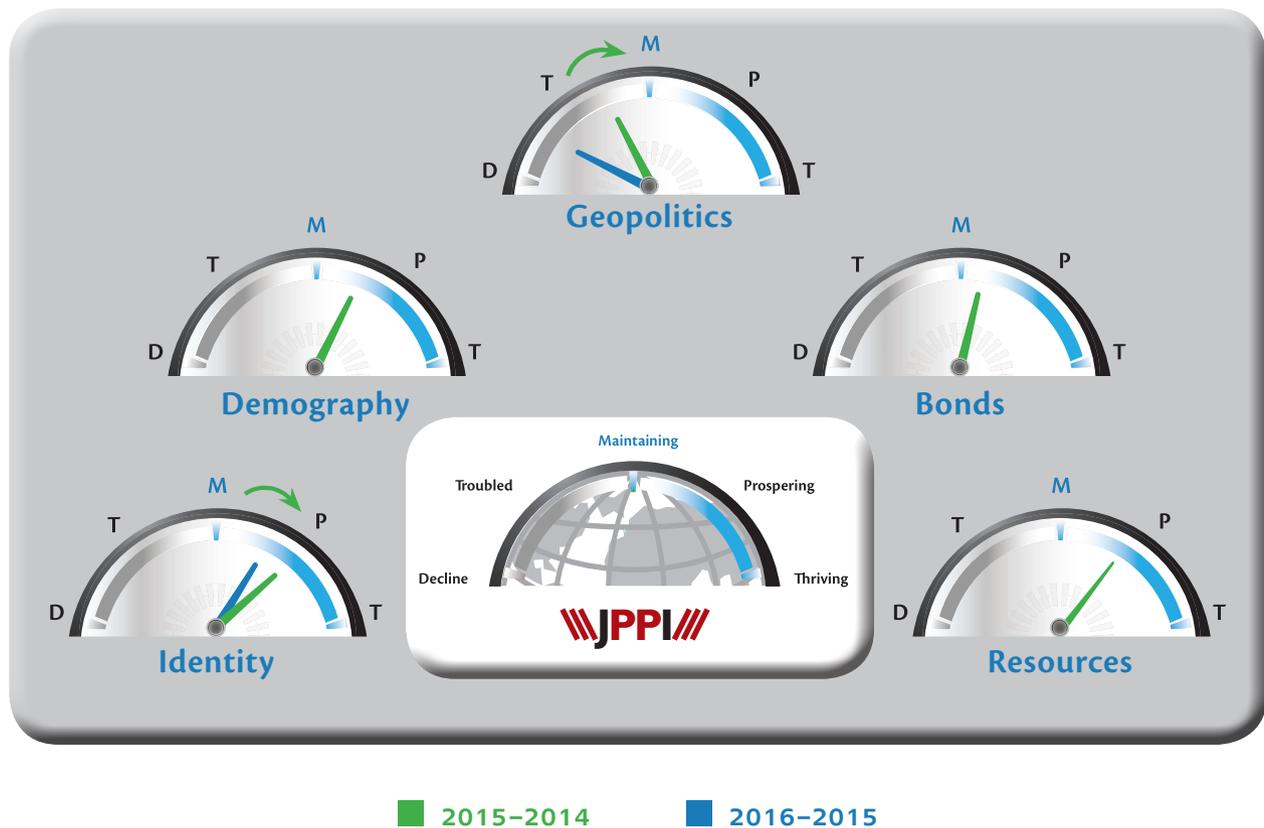
Israel continues to be a source of innovation and punches well above its weight in educational attainments, albeit not evenly across the entire population. The Technion is opening a joint educational and research facility in China's Guangdong province, one of the most highly productive industrial regions in the world. The national economy, while having shifted to lower levels of growth has still managed to weather the storms of the past decade in a manner that would be envied by many in the developed world. The transition of Israel's economy to global importance was accompanied by rising inequality among economic sectors and social classes. Dealing with Israel's long-term problems with enhancing productivity overall may put pressure on employment in low productivity sectors, which could be problematic if not accompanied by sound policy to ease this transition.

In the Jewish world as a whole, the past year saw no major transitions or events. Over the longer term, the nature of Jewish philanthropy and the sources of its wealth may be affected by several factors. One is the generational change at the heads of some of its leading philanthropic families and foundations. There are indications that this generation may either be less attracted to Jewish people giving or more inclined to seek performance-based funding opportunities over more traditional giving patterns. It remains to be

seen what effects may also attend emigration from settled Jewish communities to either Israel or the wider world due to the perception of increased anti-Semitism. Much depends on who is leaving, where they are going, and what they are able to reconstruct of their former lives in their new

locales. They may find themselves forced into a lower socioeconomic standing than they formerly enjoyed or possibly less affiliation with the Jewish community in their new locale. It is an issue that Israel and the wider Jewish world should recognize and address.

Figure 1. Characterization of Key Drivers Affecting the Jewish People in the Year 2015-16



## 6. People of the Book

Many regard education and knowledge as a key determinant of the future position and status of nations. This is even truer for the Jewish people, in Israel and throughout the world. An excursion into history shows that in every century and every country where Jews enjoyed a measure of religious, cultural, or economic success, they achieved it by superior knowledge, including apt governance. They learned languages, professions, trade routes, diplomacy, financial and other skills, and in some countries even military arts. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century they have excelled in science, innovation, finance, and general culture, which irritated their enemies but impressed the rulers of the day and made some Jews indispensable. Israel's thriving high-tech sector and its excellence in science and technology are not a revolution in Jewish history, but a culmination of Jewish history.

Every country promotes education and culture, and all want to excel in science and technology. Can the "People of the Book" hold its place? Surely there are many reasons to worry, particularly in Israel. Notwithstanding the great difficulties of finding and evaluating the necessary data, it is important to add a sixth gauge to the currently five Annual Assessment gauges that attempt to measure the overall situation of the Jewish people from year to year: the "People of the Book gauge."

The proposed assessment will use the "hard power – soft power" paradigm coined in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It will evaluate the "knowledge base" of different types of Jewish competitive strength.

### Hard Power I: Economic Strength

The analytical starting point is OECD's 1996 *The Knowledge-Based Economy*, one of its most widely read and politically influential publications. Israel's productivity rates are low and half of Israel's exports are from its high-tech sector and generated by ten percent of its working population. These are reasons for concern that must be addressed. Jewish wealth in the Diaspora is also intimately connected with knowledge. Continued Jewish excellence in regard to educational, scientific, professional and cultural achievement will also form an important part of this assessment.

### Hard Power II: Military Strength

Recently a senior military officer spoke of Israel's education gap and warned that the IDF's demand for engineer officers exceeds the supply. This could sap Israel's long-term military strength.

### Soft Power: Cultural Achievements

Defining and measuring cultural achievements objectively is problematic. Yet the importance of soft power cannot be overestimated because it shapes international public opinion and even politics. In May 2016, the historian Niall Ferguson wrote: "I am a philo-Semite. The disproportionate Jewish contribution to Western civilization – not least to science and arts – is one of the most astonishing achievements of modern history." At the same time, a rising wave of global anti-Semitism denies the Jews and Israel any commendable achievements.

The Jewish people's contributions to humanity has been peculiarly significant in relation to its size. Throughout history Jews have been committed to education and achieving excellence, and have thus helped make some of the greatest advances in the fields of science and technology. However, the Jewish people's ability to maintain its qualitative intellectual edge could be challenged by technological developments predicted to take place within the next few generations.

Looking at contemporary science today, substantial evidence suggests, and many prominent experts predict, that the world is on the cusp of a dramatic technological revolution. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and biotechnology could potentially change human existence and the global order as much as the agricultural or industrial revolutions in previous eras.

A miniscule population relative to the vast population of our planet, the Jewish people will not be able to shape the larger societal and cultural forces that may be unleashed as a result of scientific developments.

This has led JPPPI to initiate a new project based on a consultation process bringing together cutting edge scientists along with sociologists, philosophers, ethicists, and rabbis to discuss how new advances may impact and shape the Jewish people and the society around us.

What is already clear is that the advances taking place in AI and biological engineering could have a profound impact on the ability of the "People of the Book" to maintain its qualitative intellectual edge.

While quantity is certainly a concern of the Jewish people, qualitative excellence becomes even more critical to its thriving survival.



Russia	808,000	183,000	23,744	50	80		-
Ukraine	777,000	60,000	7,989	81	80	15,448	-
Rest FSU Europe	312,000	24,300	-	-	65-75		-
FSU Asia	254,000	18,600	-	-	50-75	681	-
ASIA (REST)	104,000	20,100	-	-	-	250	-
AFRICA	195,000	74,700	-	-	-	420	-
Ethiopia	-	100	1,773	174	-	91	-
South Africa	118,000	69,800	13,197	116	15-24.9	207	2/400 <sup>p</sup>
Morocco	-	2,400	8,194	126	-	121	-
Other countries	-	2,400	-	-	-		-
OCEANIA	70,000	120,400	-	-	-	119	-
Australia	65,000	112,800	47,317	2	15-24.9	-	6/150 <sup>q</sup>
New Zealand and other countries	5,000	7,600	35,966	9	15-24.9	-	1/121 <sup>r</sup>

- Source: Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, The A. Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- Source: Delia Pergola, Sergio, World Jewish Population, 2014. In: Arnold Dashfsky and Ira Sheskin (eds.), American Jewish Year Book 2014 (Appendix)
- Source: Website for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook for 2014. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), per capita (world currency).
- A measure of a country's development based on public health, educational level and real income level. Source: Human Development Report 2014, Work for Human Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, Monthly Bulletin of Statistics in Israel, January 2016.
- Based on previous year's statistics, unless otherwise specified.
- Does not include "without religion", includes East Jerusalem, Golan Heights and West Bank.
- According to population predictions from the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (medium alternative), by the year 2025, Israel's Jewish population will grow to 7.3 million (Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2014, Table 2.10, p. 111).
- Source: Knesset website.
- Aside from this measure of 5.7 million Jews, the Pew Jewish People Survey from 2013 found another one million people (600,000 adults and 400,000 children) who self-identified as partially Jewish.
- Source: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/jewcong14.html>
- The statistics were updated with the generous assistance of David Cooper, Director of Government Relations at CJA – the Center for Israel and Jewish Affairs in Canada.
- Source: analysis by the JPP based on: <http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/UK-parliament-may-have-fewer-Jewish-MPs-after-election-400773> and on a list of current Parliament members: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/#nav-B>
- Source: <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/80140000.pdf>
- There are no official records as to the number of Jews in parliament, rather these are estimates conducted with the generous assistance of the Alliance of the Jewish Communities in Hungary.
- Source: <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/80140000.pdf> Statistics were updated with the generous assistance of David Sacks, Deputy Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.
- Source: Whitman, Ariel, 30/08/2016, "Record number of Jewish Lawmakers Sworn in to Australian Parliament," Jerusalem Post <<http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Record-number-of-Jewish-lawmakers-sworn-in-to-Australian-Parliament-466399>>
- Statistics were updated with the generous assistance of Steven Goodman, Head of the Council of Jewish Communities in New Zealand.

Country	Jewish Population (Core Definition)		GDP per capita, PPP Intl \$	Index Of Human Development – World Rank	Recent Out- marriage Rate (%)	Aliyah	Number of Jewish Legislature Members / Seats In Legislature
	1970 <sup>a</sup>	2015 <sup>b</sup>					
WORLD	12,633,000	14,310,500	-	-	Most recent	30,402	-
ISRAEL	2,582,000	6,217,400 <sup>9th</sup>	33,658	18	5	-	103/120 <sup>i</sup>
NORTH AMERICA	5,686,000	6,086,000	-	-	-	3,133	-
United States	5,400,000	5,700,000 <sup>i</sup>	55,904	8	50<	2,748	29/535 <sup>k</sup>
Canada	286,000	386,000	45,488	9	15-24.9	385	13/443 <sup>i</sup>
LATIN AMERICA	514,000	382,200	-	-	-	-	-
Argentina	282,000	181,000	22,375	40	25-34.9	282	-
Brazil	90,000	94,500	15,690	75	25-34.9	461	-
Mexico	35,000	40,000	18,334	74	1-4.9	-	-
Other countries	107,000	66,700	-	-	15-95	-	-
EUROPE NON-FSU	1,331,000	1,123,800	-	-	-	-	-
France	530,000	467,500	41,221	22	25-34.9	7,030	-
United Kingdom	390,000	290,000	40,958	14	26	668	20/650 <sup>m</sup>
Germany	30,000	117,500	47,033	6	45-54.9	120	0/630 <sup>n</sup>
Romania	-	9,300	20,697	52	-	21	-
Bulgaria	-	2,000	18,501	59	-	13	-
Hungary	70,000	47,700	26,074	44	60	81	5<= <sup>o</sup>
Other EU	171,000	149,800	-	-	33-75	-	-
Other non-EU	140,000	40,000	-	-	50-80	-	-
FSU	2,151,000	285,900	-	-	-	16,129	-



## **PART 2**

# **Dimensions of Jewish Well-Being**

**Geopolitics**

**Demography**

**Bonds within and between Communities**

**Identity Formation and Expression**

**Material Resources**

**People of the Book**



# 4

## An Opportunity for a Geopolitical Adjustment

### Introduction

The developments of recent months have highlighted the strategic question marks hovering over Israel. There is much uncertainty in the violent and turbulent Mideast, where the past building blocks of the regional order are collapsing and no new stable order is in sight. Even the international arena, which is relevant to the Middle East and to Israel's strategic resilience, is far from stable and significant change is underway. Israel faces a geopolitical reality filled with "moving parts" that influence one another. This creates a wide range of scenarios, each of which includes different, and at times contradictory, challenges for Israel.

One expression of the strategic uncertainty in Israel's midst is the sharp polarization among analysts and commentators about the effects of recent developments on Israel's strategic stature. Just as one can find cogent assertions that Israel's strategic situation is tough and worrying, one can also find equally rational arguments that Israel's strategic situation has never been better.

Although decisions made in Jerusalem have only a limited influence on the general strategic environment, they can, from Israel's and the Jewish people's point of view, be fateful.

This report points out the past year's key developments standing behind Israel's most pressing strategic challenges:

- The nuclear agreement reached with Iran, which was described by Prime Minister Netanyahu as a "mistake of historic proportions."
- The danger of security deterioration – on both the northern front (Hezbollah, ISIS, and radical Islamist elements in Syria), and the southern front ( Hamas and terror groups operating in Sinai).
- Palestinian terror – the danger of the continuing "Lone-Wolf Intifada."
- The continued tensions with the United States and the chance of a "new page" in the relationship after the U.S. presidential elections.

- Erosion of U.S. interest in playing a central role – to lead and to maintain a presence in the Middle East.
- The push to alter the model for achieving a diplomatic solution between Israel and the Palestinians from U.S.-led bilateral negotiations to multi-lateral ones, or to an enforced solution under UN auspices.
- Attempts to degrade Israel's international standing through BDS and de-legitimization campaigns.

### Rebuilding the U.S.- Israel relationship should be Israel's top priority

The threatened resilience of the triangular relationship: Jerusalem – Washington – the U.S. Jewish community, as Israel increasingly becomes a partisan issue in America.

Alongside the challenges Israel faces, with all their dangerous elements, Jerusalem also has considerable new opportunities to improve its relations with the moderate Sunni world, which is showing an increasing openness in light of the threats emanating from Iran and radical Islamic terror groups.

As **the U.S. is Israel's only significant ally, rebuilding this relationship should be Israel's top priority.** These relations were strained during President Obama's tenure. Fixing them will not be simple as some of the key issues at the heart of the tensions – the nuclear agreement with Iran and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, including its repercussions and implications – could widen

the gaps between Jerusalem's and Washington's positions. Continued tensions threaten Israel's strategic stature and could put further pressure on the American Jewish community, placing it between a “rock and a hard place.” This, in turn, could erode the resilience of the “triangular relationship”: Jerusalem – Washington – the U.S. Jewish community, a bedrock of Israel's and the Jewish people's strength.

### The international system and U.S. standing

“International disorder” continues to characterize the geopolitical arena. Since the end of the Cold War and the period of American hegemony that followed (1989 – 2001), the international system has yet to coalesce into a stable and functioning order. While the U.S. remains the strongest power in the world, the “American moment,” in which the U.S. enjoyed hegemonic status in a unipolar system, has passed. Recent frictions between the United States and Russia have at times been reminiscent of the mutual hostility that defined the Cold War years. Horrific terror attacks committed by ISIS around the world add to this sense of global disorder. Some attacks have been directed and initiated by the organization's leadership, others were inspired and encouraged by its ideology. Alongside attacks in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Lebanon, ISIS has also been able to reach France, Belgium, Turkey, Tunisia, the United States, Egypt (downing a Russian passenger plane), Indonesia, Yemen, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, and Germany.

However, there have also been a number of bright spots in the international arena over the past year: the UN Climate Summit reached its first agreement (December 12, 2015), committing the countries of the world to reduce carbon emissions in order to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Also, the Nuclear Security Summit (April 2016) made some progress in decreasing the threat of nuclear material falling into the hands of terror groups; (Russia, which holds the largest store of nuclear material, did not participate, due to tensions with the United States.).

The assertive and dominant forces in the international order today do not seem to draw from the values of liberal democracy that guided the United States as it attempted to reshape the international order after WWII, in a way that would increase stability, encourage liberty, and facilitate free trade. The appeal of these values has weakened as a result of the 2008 financial crisis, deepening social inequality brought on by globalization, the fading of hope initially sparked by the Arab Spring, and the crisis taking place in Europe, as expressed by the Brexit vote, which determined that Great Britain will leave the European Union (June 23, 2016).

Europe is mired in disagreement as to how to handle a litany of challenges: a million migrants from the Middle East and Africa, and the possibility that many more will come; the ISIS initiated terror attacks that shake the open border concept and the personal sense of security in Europe; political radicalization on both the right and left and the growing discomfort with the traditional political

system; economic crises, especially the risk that Greece will declare bankruptcy and add to the trend of exiting the European Union.

Centers of tensions around the world, including Syria, the South China Sea, and Ukraine, hold the potential for serious deterioration. In parallel to the rise of China and the geopolitical challenge Moscow continues to pose to Washington, United States' international stature continues to erode. The superpower – home to the most prosperous Jewish community and half of the Jewish people in the world – provides friendship and assistance critical to Israel.

The weakening of America's international standing comes with another development that significantly threatens Israel's basic interests – the growing American reluctance to maintain a hands on global presence, especially in the Middle East. The Sunni countries are concerned that the U.S. will neglect its special relationship with them in favor of a strategic reliance on Iran. The American president's promise to Tehran that reaching a nuclear agreement would allow Iran to be "a successful regional power"<sup>1</sup> is cause for trepidation in Saudi Arabia and the broader Sunni camp. They fear the nuclear agreement was part of a "grand bargain" granting Iran an upgraded regional status and hastening its quest for regional hegemony.

**The Sunni countries are concerned that the U.S. will neglect them in favor of Iran**

Some in Washington are convinced that, in the long run, Iran is a preferable ally to Saudi Arabia. Its population is fairly modern, interested in democracy and progress, and is, overall, less hostile to the United States. The fact that ISIS is currently a common enemy of the U.S. and Iran strengthens this position. The moderate Arab camp's disappointment in the United States' regional conduct was thrown into sharp relief by President Obama's reception at the GCC summit in Riyadh (April 20, 2016). The Saudi king received the heads of state from the Gulf countries, but sent the governor of Riyadh to greet the American president. A measure of humiliation was added when local television did not go to the trouble of broadcasting the arrival of the "leader of the free world."

Israel will be significantly affected not just by the change in the quality of the relationship with Washington, but also by the change in America's global standing. The growing regional perception that the U.S. – Israel's strongest ally – is abandoning the Middle East, erodes Israel's deterrence power. Insights offered pertaining to America's decreased interest in the Middle East have included: Washington's peaked interest in Asia, as it frees up more resources to deal with the challenge from China; its diminished dependence on energy imports; and growing disappointment with its inability to achieve its goals through the use of military force – especially in the Middle East.

Demurring from military action in Syria, despite the crossing of the "red line" the American president himself drew (the use of chemical

weapons), provided an opening for Russia to aggressively reclaim its position as a regional power broker. Accepting the deterioration of central governance in Iraq, the collapse of Libya, and limiting the fight against ISIS essentially to aerial bombing and the deployment of military advisers and trainers – are all emblematic of America's willingness to close the current chapter of its military presence in the region. Many in the U.S. feel that this involvement, which came with a heavy cost of blood and treasure, failed to achieve significant goals. The decreased U.S. appetite for involvement in the Middle East is coming to the fore, ironically, as the region is in the midst of a storm and needs the stabilizing force of a superpower.

At the same time, many commentators reject the claims of declining U.S. power and present data that prove that it remains the leading global power: from its military and economic might through the excellence of its universities. However, it is not enough to possess impressive capabilities if the regional perception is that the U.S. does not intend to stay and use them.

In opposition to the voices in the U.S. advocating disengagement from the Middle Eastern "hornet's nest," there are other voices warning that if the U.S. were to disengage from the region it would undermine global security, invite strikes inside the U.S., and potentially ignite a nuclear war. They admonish that it would lead to a global economic crisis (even if the U.S. itself is not dependent on Middle Eastern oil – disruptions to the supply can harm the global economy, on which the U.S. is dependent and an integral part).

President Obama continues citing his ending America's ground wars, which had mandated the presence of tens of thousands of American troops, as a foreign policy achievement – one of the jewels in the crown of his presidency. He is doubtful of America's attempt to define the geopolitical reality on its own. According to him, many of the world's problems do not have quick solutions, if any at all, and need to be solved within collective international frameworks that privilege diplomacy over the use of force. According to Obama, American interests at times require “leading from behind” and sometimes not at all.

The “Obama Doctrine,” laid out in a series of interviews the president gave to journalist Jeffrey Goldberg,<sup>2</sup> sees America's use of military force as a recipe that mostly leads to failure. Justified use of force, according to this approach, only pertains to direct and imminent threats to U.S. national security. This is the result of the failure of U.S. military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, which left the American public war-weary and suspicious of foreign military adventures. The president's adviser, Ben Rhodes, clarified explicitly that the president is convinced that “deepening the military involvement in the Middle East will eventually hurt the economy, and hurt America's ability to identify new opportunities and face additional challenges, and perhaps more importantly – threaten the lives of American soldiers for reasons not directly in the interest of U.S. national security.”<sup>3</sup> There are even those who regard Obama's stubborn resolve to reach a nuclear deal with Iran as an important milestone in the disengagement of American commitments

in the region. Obama is not impressed with Russia's presence in the Middle East. In his view, Russia will soon find itself mired in the “regional swamp.”

Obama is also not impressed by the axiom that a power like the United States needs to maintain credibility in the international arena, and that if an American president draws a “red line” that is crossed, he must respond, no matter what. In his opinion, blindly following this principle led to the bloody entanglement in Vietnam. Obama's America does not assist in any way in which innocents are killed, and does not need to send its troops to fight Russia over spheres of influence like Ukraine.

From President Obama's perspective, the economic future lies in Asia along many strategic challenges. Goldberg writes that the president is prepared to open a discussion questioning whether those considered friends of the U.S. are indeed friends, and if those considered enemies are indeed so. Despite that Obama maintained Israel's QME (Qualitative Military Edge) throughout his presidency, former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has said that the president challenged this notion in one discussion, asking: “Why does the U.S. need to maintain Israel's QME, which provides it with access to the most advanced U.S. arms, more than to America's Arab allies.”<sup>4</sup>

Obama has also questioned the value of America's relationships with Sunni Arab states like Saudi Arabia, while in the same breath noting the potential for developing relations with Iran. The president has also expressed his discomfort with “free loaders” in the Middle East and Europe –

who expect the U.S. to shed its blood and drain its budget on their behalf.

The question that remains is whether the Obama Doctrine will continue to define American foreign policy after Obama himself exits the White House. In other words, to what extent is U.S. conduct in the international arena a result of the personality and proclivities of a particular president, and to what extent does it derive from deeper demographic, ideological, and political processes.

The strategic vacuum left by the United States is not only a signal to Moscow. China is offering

**The question that remains is whether the Obama Doctrine will continue to define American foreign policy after he exits the White House**

Middle Eastern autocrats a more palatable model for emulation: rapid and constant economic development without a democratic system of government. The Chinese president rushed to visit Iran after the nuclear agreement was signed (January 23, 2016) in order to open a "new chapter" in relations between the two countries (he also visited Egypt and Saudi Arabia).

China, in 2015, became the largest oil importer in the world, most of which comes from the Middle East. China sees the region as a promising market for its goods, and includes the Middle East in the framework of its "One Belt, One Road" initiative" intended to connect China to Europe and Asia creating a giant market comprising 4.4 billion people in 26 countries. "The Asia Infrastructure

Investment Bank" (AIIB) established by China is intended to support this program and China's involvement in the region. In parallel to this activity, China is stirring up real concern among its neighbors and is challenging international law with moves to fulfill its claims to sovereignty over disputed islands in the South China Sea. China is constructing artificial islands in the region and positioning missiles and military forces on them. (The sea is rich in mineral and fishing resources, and provides cargo shipping lanes valued at over 5 trillion dollars a year.)

Despite fatigue and doubts about distant military involvement, it is too early to presume the direction American foreign policy will take following the elections. The history of American foreign policy is characterized by cycles of isolationism and active intervention, and some claim that the scales will tilt toward a more assertive and active foreign policy after the Obama era. Even one especially harsh terrorist attack originating from the Middle East could be enough to catapult the region back to the top of America's foreign policy agenda. Another possibility is that Russian and Chinese challenges to U.S. leadership will elicit an American reaction.

**The Regional System: Threats and Opportunities**

Israel cannot expect near-term change in its violent and unstable neighborhood. Sixty percent of the region's residents are 25 or younger, among them 30 percent are unemployed. Regional economies are dithering, central rule is failing, and

the state system is weakening, at times collapsing. Tribal and kinship ties are proving stronger than civic loyalty to the state. The initial hope the Arab Spring inspired has given way to bitter disappointment. Tunisia, where the Arab Spring began, is the only one of these countries that has managed to remain democratic.

The Middle East turmoil spins a vacuum that allows non-state actors or radical sub state actors, armed and violent – local militias, terror organizations and radical Islamist ideologues to flourish. They, who at times ally with one another, erode the power of the central state. They destroy economies and infrastructure and attempt to render certain international borders irrelevant. Civil wars in Syria and Yemen, and the deadly terror from ISIS, have uprooted millions. Three million have found shelter in Turkey, 1.2 million in Jordan, and a million in Lebanon (a quarter of its population). Despite setbacks in recent months, ISIS remains in control of considerable territories in Iraq and Syria. This adds to the collapse of the nation-state system in the region and deepens the trend of "failed states," whose control over their own sovereign territory is nominal at best (Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, and Yemen).

However, although the Middle East is turbulent and violent, Israel does not face any conventional military threat, as it has in the past. At the same time, Arab states are investing massive sums in advanced weapons platforms, and in a way that could potentially threaten Israel's QME one day. Weaponry acquired by Arab states to offset the threat of Iran could be used against Israel in the future, given a change in regime or policy. The

threat to Israel's security today stems primarily from terror organizations working out of unclearly defined territories ( Hamas) or from failed states (Lebanon, Syria). These groups largely employ an asymmetric combat strategy and operate out of densely populated areas. The IDF is thus forced to contend with a reality in which building deterrence over time is more difficult than when the foe is a conventional and functioning nation-state. Therefore, Israel must prepare for threats stemming from the 1400-year-old Sunni-Shia conflict, as well as those from cyber warfare and future technologies.

### Iran

The nuclear agreement (July 14, 2015) pushed back the point at which Iran becomes a nuclear power. However, at the same time, it granted legitimacy to Iran as a threshold power and allowed it to keep its nuclear enrichment capacity and infrastructure. And, after 15 years, Iran will be allowed to reduce its military nuclear "breakout time" to a period of weeks or even days. The agreement went into effect after the IAEA<sup>6</sup> confirmed that Iran had fulfilled its commitments according to the agreement (January 16, 2016). Following this, UN sanctions were lifted and roughly 100 billion dollars of frozen funds became available, and Iran was once again allowed to sell crude oil on the international market.

**Israel must prepare for threats stemming from the 1400 –year-old Sunni-Shia conflict, as well as those from cyber warfare**

Iran continues to strive for greater regional influence. It supports Assad directly with its combat forces fighting in Syria and through its support of Hezbollah and Shia militias from around the region. Iran assists the Houthi rebels in Yemen. It continues to develop an array of ballistic missiles and conducts missile tests, in defiance, or at least against the spirit, of resolution UNSC 2231. at least the spirit of the resolution. The nuclear agreement allows Iran to stream greater amounts of cash to its military. It signed a giant arms deal worth 8 billion dollars with Russia, and is starting to deploy the new S-300 Surface to Air Missile system. Tehran is even in the closing stages of a deal with Boeing to acquire 80 passenger planes worth 17.6 billion dollars. Congressional opponents of this deal argue that these planes can be transformed or used as is for military purposes, and that in light of Iran's hostile behavior, there should be no aiding Iran beyond the narrow terms of the nuclear agreement.

Iran's leaders boast of their dominance in four Arab capitals: Beirut; Sanaa; Damascus; and Baghdad. It seems that Iran assumes the United States is not interested in risking the nuclear agreement over unrelated issues. In various segments within the American administration, a worldview exists that seeks to deepen the relationship with Iran and not impede its reintegration in the international system. This approach assumes that moderate elements in Iran will be reinforced over time. To this end, the U.S. tends to lower the barriers preventing Iran's banking system from reentering the international financial system, despite that in reality Iranian banks are used for money laundering, act as a funnel for terror financing, and do not measure

up to international transparency standards and regulations. Obama's criticism of Saudi Arabia and its traditional Arab Gulf allies, hints at an approach that seeks a new regional balance of power that grants greater legitimacy to Iran's aspirations. Iran insists that it has the right to conduct missile testing as it pleases; one of these missiles was festooned with a banner that read: "Israel must be wiped off the Earth."

Prime Minister Netanyahu described the nuclear agreement as a "mistake of historic proportions," and the Defense Ministry under Avigdor Lieberman compared the agreement to the "Munich Accords... which did not prevent World War II and the Holocaust." <sup>7</sup> In diametrical opposition to those characterizations, IDF Chief of Staff Eizenkot said the agreement signaled a strategic shift in what had been the main threat to the IDF over the past decade. According to Eizenkot, this was a "significant shift to the vector on which Iran was travelling – it has many risks but also opportunities." <sup>8</sup>

Backers of the agreement in the United States claim that it prevented a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, as Iran's regional enemies have concluded that it pushes back the danger of Iran arming itself with nuclear weapons.<sup>9</sup> Will the time-out the deal creates, 10-15 years, be enough to alter the Iranian regime? What will the future of the conflict between radicals and moderates in Iran be? Over 60 percent of Iran's population is 30 or younger. The revolutionary ideology is not as attractive to many of them. The results of the recent parliamentary elections indicated the weight and possible influence of less radical elements in Iran.

The nuclear agreement did not, however, bring a halt to Iran's regional subversion. It may have even boosted Iran's self-confidence. Iran can check off a list of victories in this regard: its Syrian ally Assad manages to maintain his position; its influence in Iraq has grown; and Saudi Arabia cannot achieve a decisive victory against Iranian backed Shia Houthi Militias in Yemen.

The IDF assesses that Iran will not decrease its efforts to deepen its influence in the region. Rather, it will continue to operate through proxy terror groups and militias. In this vein, Iran has its officers in Syria commanding battles, and it continues to fund terror groups, transfer advanced arms to Hezbollah, and attempts to smuggle arms into Gaza.

The IDF assesses that while Iran will not abandon its strategic goal of achieving a nuclear weapon in the future, for the next five years it will fulfill the terms of the agreement in order to reap its benefits. Alongside easing the threat from a nuclear Iran, the deal between Russia and the United States on dismantling Syria's chemical weapon arsenal (2013) pushed another serious threat away from Israel. (However, it is becoming clear that Assad has retained part of the arsenal he committed to dismantle and hand over. He has been attacking civilian targets with chlorine gas. In addition, there are reports that chemical weapons have made it into the hands of terror elements, and of the methodical attempts by ISIS to obtain such weapons.)

## Syria

The war in Syria rages on and the number of casualties nears half a million. Four million have fled the country while another 7 million are internally displaced. Life expectancy in Syria plummeted from an average of 70 to 56 years. With the help of Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, Assad's standing has been restored, and the United States and the West seem to have shifted their tone toward him. Given the anarchy expected in his absence, Assad is now being described more and more as a part of the solution – the least bad option available. The Geneva talks led to a partial cease fire (February 12, 2016), which excluded those militias defined as terror groups – ISIS and Jabhat al Nusra (which has since disassociated from Al-Qaeda and changed its name). The cease-fire was to precede UN-led negotiations on Syria's future. However, the number of parties involved in Syria and the conflicts of interest between them make achieving a stable solution quite difficult. This reality threatens to cut short the ceasefire agreement announced recently (September 9, 2016) by Secretary of State Kerry following a series of discussions with his Russian counterpart.

There are hundreds of factions fighting in Syria, divided by area, tribe, ethnicity, ideology, and religion. Additionally, regional forces (Saudi, Turkish, Iranian, and Hezbollah) and foreign powers (Russia, the U.S.) are enmeshed in the combat.

Following the downing of a Russian passenger plane over the Sinai Desert (October 31, 2015), Putin announced (November 17, 2015) that he

was joining the fight against ISIS, and dispatched a warship off the Syrian coast. Russia's involvement did much to tip the scales of war against the rebels, who became a favorite target of Russian bombers. President Putin, however, surprised everyone when he announced (March 14, 2016) that his military forces had completed their mission and were returning home. In reality, however, Russian planes continue bombing rebel forces, and Russia continues to maintain a naval base in Tartus and an air base in Latakia. Despite warnings that Putin would "sink in the Syrian mud," the Russian

**the Russian president has succeeded in achieving his main goal of restoring Assad's power**

president has succeeded in achieving his main goal of restoring Assad's power and positioning Russia as a force that cannot be ignored in the Middle East - at least for now. Engineered as a deliberate countering of the image of the U.S. in the region,

Russia has presented itself as not shying away from the use of force and as an unwaveringly loyal ally. A bold expression of Moscow's involvement in the region can be seen in Tehran's granting permission to Russian planes to take off from Iranian air bases (August 16, 2016) to strike targets in Syria.

Given Russia's aerial activity in Syria, Jerusalem carefully maintains close coordination and communication with Moscow. Following his visit to Moscow (September 21, 2015), Netanyahu disclosed that he and President Putin had agreed on a coordination mechanism to prevent confrontations between the IDF and

Russian forces in Syria. Following an additional meeting with Putin in Moscow (April 21, 2016), Netanyahu explained: "First, we are working to the best of our ability to prevent the transfer of advanced weaponry from Iran and Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Second, we are working to prevent the establishment of an additional terror front against us in the Golan Heights. These are red lines and we will continue to maintain them ... I came here with one main goal - to strengthen the security coordination between us so as to avoid mishaps, misunderstandings, and unnecessary confrontations."<sup>10</sup> And so, Israel is interested in Russian assistance to prevent Iranian and Hezbollah operatives from approaching its border.

Israel does not hide the fact that it conducts military strikes in Syria. According to Netanyahu, Israel is "acting in Syria from time to time, we are working to prevent the transformation of Syria into another front against us."<sup>11</sup> Israel is not interested in a strategic outcome that strengthens the Iranian coalition in Syria. But aside from the red lines outlined by Netanyahu, Israel is unable to impact the outcome. The working assumption in Israel is that instability in Syria will continue for years to come, and it needs to prepare for situations in which one of the militias in Syria develops a taste for firing on Israel - either the Sunni jihadist groups (situated in the Syrian Golan heights but who for the time being hold their fire against Israel), or Shia groups working in Iran's employ, and are trying to develop a front in Southern Syria that could one day be used against Israel.

## ISIS

In recent months, ISIS' momentum has been stalled. The organization has lost a quarter of the vast territory it captured in Iraq and Syria, especially key cities like Ramadi, Tikrit, Palmyra (Tadmor) and Faluja. These defeats could undermine its aura of invincibility and the allure that attracts young Muslims from around the world. The expected fall of Mosul and Raqqa would reinforce this trend. Perhaps the terror attacks outside of the Middle East are intended to compensate for these failures, and testify to the growing threat of the organization's activities around the world.

ISIS spokesmen have even started threatening Israel. A first Hebrew-language video was released on October 25, 2015, and promised that: "Soon there will not remain even a single Jew in Jerusalem or in any part of the country, and we will continue until we eradicate this disease worldwide."<sup>12</sup> The jihadist threat to Israel could develop on a number of fronts. For example, Liwa Shuhada al Yarmouk (Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade) with 600-1000 fighters, which declared allegiance to ISIS, is mainly situated on the border between Israel, Syria, and Jordan, but has branches in Sinai and even in Gaza. Terror groups in Sinai primarily target the Egyptian military, but attacks on Israel have also been made and more may be carried out in the future.

Washington defines ISIS as a central threat, and has even considered possible worst case scenarios in which it might deploy a dirty bomb that combines radioactive material with conventional explosives. American bombers are attacking from the air while providing intelligence to a coalition of

ground forces (which creates a reality of indirect cooperation between the U.S. and Iran, who views the murderous Sunni group as a mortal enemy and is thus assisting the Iraqi regime in its fight against it).

Advances in the fight against ISIS do not ensure its quick demise, and have certainly not chipped away the social and ideological foundation from which it sprang. As long as Iraq and Syria lack effective central governments, ISIS will survive. And even if it loses its territorial base of operations in Syria and Iraq, it will continue to pose a significant practical and ideological threat.

**As long as Iraq and Syria lack effective central governments, ISIS will survive**

## Hezbollah

The IDF considers Hezbollah the most serious military threat Israel faces. Hezbollah is controlled by Iran, which grants it a yearly budget of one billion dollars. The lifting of sanctions earlier this year may allow Iran to increase this amount. But Hezbollah's support for Assad undermines its standing in the Arab world, and specifically in Lebanon. The GCC has declared Hezbollah a terror organization (March 2, 2016). At least 5000 Hezbollah troops are fighting alongside Assad's forces in Syria, and it is assessed to have suffered at least 1500 killed in action losses with another 5000 injured, significant numbers considering the entire organization has about 30,000 active combat troops (and another 25,000 reservists).

The Sunni Arab world views Hezbollah's standing behind the despised Assad as a betrayal. This has damaged the image Hezbollah has tried to cultivate over the years – that it safeguards the interests of all Lebanon's citizens against Israel. Hezbollah's involvement in Syria has turned Lebanon into a theater of the Syrian Civil War, and has undermined domestic stability there.

Although Hezbollah is suffering significant losses in Syria, it is gaining considerable combat experience in a complex war. In Israel's next conflict with Hezbollah, the IDF will face a foe whose conduct and capabilities increasingly resemble that of a conventional military. Hezbollah, however, has been deterred from opening a front against Israel since the Second Lebanon War. The organization avoids responding to attacks attributed to Israel against strategic arms transfers from Syria, and on advanced Iranian missile arsenals stored in Damascus. However, Hezbollah's continued attempts to arm itself with advanced weapons from Iran and Syria, and Israel's insistent interception of them, could lead to an escalation – revenge attacks against Israeli or Jewish targets abroad or full out war. Moreover, Hezbollah could, under certain circumstances, conclude that only a violent conflict with Israel can help it regain the support it lost in Lebanon and in the Arab world.

Hezbollah is positioned in 240 Shia villages in Lebanon. It has an arsenal of over 100,000 rockets, some capable of reaching deep into Israel with greater accuracy than those used by Hamas in Operation Protective Edge. Nasrallah even threatened (February 16, 2016) that in the next conflict, his forces will cause damage to Israel on

the level of a nuclear strike by launching missiles at the chemical production facilities in Haifa Bay. Israel is also preparing for the possibility that Hezbollah may try to infiltrate into Israeli territory, attempt to capture territory close to the border, and target critical infrastructure or the maritime gas installations. However, most intelligence assessments believe Hezbollah will not be interested in opening another front against Israel in the near future. Still, one cannot ignore the possibility of an unintended escalation or a deterioration that could lead to a war that would be more difficult for the Israeli home front than previous wars.

## Hamas

Since the end of Operation Protective Edge (August 26, 2014), Hamas has worked to rebuild its capabilities, especially its rockets, re-dig attack tunnels into Israeli territory, train special forces to infiltrate Israel. It is manufacturing arms locally: rockets, mortars, and drones. Hamas is generally working to maintain quiet along the border between Israel and Gaza, but at the same time is encouraging West Bank terror. Occasional rockets fired from Gaza since Protective Edge have come mainly from rogue jihadist groups, not Hamas. While 2015 saw quiet with no Israelis injured, the danger of escalation hovers constantly in the air. Some believe that new technology developed by the IDF to uncover and destroy attack tunnels prompted Hamas to fire mortars into Israel in early May 2016. The IDF returned fire and Prime Minister Netanyahu confirmed the technological breakthrough: "We are creating a form of

defense and a capability to neutralize tunnels that does not exist anywhere in the world.”<sup>13</sup>

Egypt is hostile to Hamas, and considers it a branch of the detested Muslim Brotherhood. Cairo blames Hamas for cooperating with Sinai terror groups responsible for the assassinations of Egyptian officials, such as its attorney general in June 2015. The Egyptians have created a buffer zone on the Egyptian side of its border with Gaza, and have flooded the Hamas smuggling tunnels with sea water. Talks with a Hamas delegation in Cairo (mid-March 2016) led to an attempt to reset Egypt-Hamas relations, without much success. The Egyptians are treating Hamas harshly, taking advantage of its weakness – demanding it sever ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and turn over the terror elements in Sinai it is suspected of aiding.

Hamas is operating under external pressures (Israel and Egypt) and is generating domestic unrest and public criticism due to continued poverty and high unemployment (43 percent), and the widespread destruction left from Protective Edge in 2014. Gazans have electricity only a few hours a day and the quality of their water is worsening, while Hamas hands out jobs and housing to cronies and relatives, and siphons off some of the international humanitarian aid for its own purposes – providing fertile ground for more extreme jihadi groups to rise. Hamas is interested in lifting the siege. It was disappointed that the agreement between Jerusalem and Ankara to renew relations did not stipulate the provision of a new Gaza port and the lifting of the siege. The Gazan “pressure cooker” could explode into another conflict in the future if a reconstruction effort there is viewed as plodding and ineffectual.

## Saudi Arabia

Given the real disappointment with U.S. conduct in the region, significant changes in Saudi Arabia's behavior have been detectable since the crowning of King Salman (January 23, 2015). The man behind these changes is Muhammad bin Salman, the 30-year-old prince, who is simultaneously acting as defense minister and chairman of the Council for Economic Development, and is second in line to the throne. Saudi Arabia is becoming more assertive in its foreign policy and even launched (April 25, 2016) a long term plan, “Saudi Vision 2030,” meant to diversify the economy and diminish its dependence on oil revenues.

Saudi Arabia is determined to block Iran's path to regional hegemony. Its lesson from the nuclear agreement with Iran is that it cannot count on the U.S. to block Iran's expansionism. President Obama seems to question the U.S. friendship with the kingdom, calling it “complicated”<sup>14</sup> and expressing concern over the regime's character and its dependence on the U.S. military. Riyadh, in turn, is wary of Obama and his advice to get used to a reality in which Iran has a legitimate sphere of influence in the region. Iranian maneuvering to deepen its regional influence – with militias in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon – is seen by Riyadh as an existential threat it is determined to confront. The Saudi air force is conducting strikes in Yemen, and Saudi funding is backing fighters taking on Iran's allies in Syria. Inspired by Prince Muhammad bin Salman, Saudi Arabia is averse to taking resolute action, for example, it cancelled the promised 3-billion-dollar aid package to

Lebanon's security forces citing the connection between the Lebanese army and Iranian backed Hezbollah.

In parallel, Saudi Arabia is assisting its ally Egypt with its economic challenges, granting it 22 billion dollars in aid money. In return, Egypt ceded sovereignty over the Red Sea islands Sanafir and Tiran to the Saudis (April 2016). Tellingly, this deal was conducted without Israeli opposition; Saudi Arabia supposedly accepted the military annex to the Israel-Egypt peace treaty as it relates to these two islands. This expresses the depth

**The threat from terror and from emboldened Iran create a foundation for greater cooperation with Israel**

of relations and close security cooperation between Egypt and Israel, but also indicates a convergence of interests between Jerusalem and Riyadh, and the potential for a deepening relationship between Israel and Saudi Arabia. This potential deepening was also evident in the

unusual visit to Israel by Anwar Ashki, a former general in the Saudi military. He headed a delegation of academics and businessmen (July 2016) and did not hesitate to meet with senior Israeli officials and Knesset members as an advocate of the Arab Peace Initiative.<sup>15</sup> The joint appearances of Prince Turki al Faisal (former head of Saudi intelligence) with retired senior Israeli officials was yet another indication of warming Israel-Saudi relations.

## Egypt

Egypt continues to face difficult security and economic challenges. The threat from terror and from an emboldened Iran create a foundation for greater cooperation with Israel. The Sinai branch of ISIS, with its 600 to 1000 fighters, has yet to be defeated by the Egyptian military. Egypt's hostility toward Hamas continues, and President al-Sisi does not hesitate to level built-up areas in order to create and maintain a security buffer zone on the Gaza-Egypt border, while also conducting a determined campaign to wipe out smuggling tunnels. The United States cancelled its freeze on arms sales to Egypt (April 2015), superseding democracy and human rights concerns with greater strategic considerations to help Egypt maintain stability, prevent alternative deals with Moscow, secure free passage through the Suez Canal, and preserve the peace treaty with Israel. However, U.S. voices calling for a chill in relations with Cairo are growing in response to increased domestic human rights violations.

President al-Sisi was resigned to passively watch the protests and domestic criticism over ceding Egyptian sovereignty over Sanafir and Tiran to Saudi Arabia, (April 2016). This move, seen by many Egyptians as humiliating, was made to shore up the faltering Egyptian economy, which is not showing real signs of improvement. Given the current birth rate, Egypt's population is expected to double by 2050 and will stand at around 180 million people. Half of Egypt's population lives on less than 2 dollars per day.

The security cooperation between Egypt and Israel is broad and expresses shared interests and

a similar reading of the region. The two countries similarly view terror and extremist jihadi groups as a threat, and see the need to unequivocally halt Iran's subversive behavior and its attempts to gain regional hegemony. The two are also concerned by the weakness the United States is projecting in the region. The international press has reported on Israel's intelligence assistance to Egypt as well as its toleration of peace treaty violations, so Egypt can deploy more effective weapons platforms in the fight against terror elements in Sinai.

President al-Sisi's speech (May 17, 2016), although it was fused into Israeli coalition-building politics, showed the solidity of Israel-Egypt relationship and the potential for its deepening, including in the realm of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The improved relationship was also highlighted when Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry visited Jerusalem (July 10, 2016) – the first such visit in more than nine years. Responding to claims that the Egyptian-Israeli peace is a “cold peace,” the Egyptian president promised that the peace would warm up if the Palestinian problem is solved, and expressed Egypt's willingness to contribute to the security arrangements stipulated in an agreement. According to al-Sisi, “If we can all join forces in order to solve the Palestinian issue by creating hope for the Palestinians and assuring security for the Israelis, we will be able to write a new chapter that may prove to be more important than the peace accords between Israel and Egypt.”<sup>16</sup> As a caveat to its willingness to be of assistance, Egypt has made it clear that no one should expect it to enter “blindly” into a political process where a positive outcome is doubtful.

## Jordan

Jordan was forced to absorb 1.2 million Syrian refugees, 13 percent of its population. This situation is draining Jordan's already fragile economy and adding a source of instability. The Syrian refugees are in addition to the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees already in Jordan, costing the kingdom 20 percent of its budget. The regime must prepare for the possibility of an ISIS attack and spill overs of the fighting in Syria into its territory.

The foreign press has reported on the strong security cooperation between Israel and Jordan. Israel is helping Jordan deal with its severe lack of water resources. In addition to the 50 million cubic meters Israel transfers to Jordan each year as part of the peace agreement, Israel allocated another 50 million cubic meters of water from the Sea of Galilee. In return, Jordan will transfer to Israel an equivalent amount of water from the desalination plant under construction north of Aqaba. The two countries are also cooperating in planning a pipeline project to transfer water from the Gulf of Aqaba to the rapidly depleting Dead Sea. An agreement was recently signed to provide Jordan with \$10 billion of Israeli natural gas over 15 years.

**Jordan was forced to absorb 1.2 million Syrian refugees which is draining Jordan's economy and adding source of instability**

## Turkey

The failed coup attempt (July 16, 2016) allowed President Erdogan to consolidate his control over the regime and oust political opponents. It is not yet clear if the shock Turkey underwent and the way in which Erdogan responded will seriously influence Ankara's foreign policy. Turkey's foreign relations are replete with conflicts and challenges: the aspiration to see Assad disappear; relations with Russia that were seriously strained after the downing of a Russian fighter jet (November 24, 2015), for which Erdogan apologized and offered financial compensation; and Egypt, which harbors hostility toward Ankara as a result of its support of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. Turkey's fear that a Kurdish polity is forming in northern Syria is leading Turkey to invade Syrian territory (August 24, 2016).

Turkey is discovering that improving relations with Israel has strategic benefits – from cooperating against terror to being included in Israel's gas fields projects (it would reduce its reliance on Russian energy). President Erdogan even explained to journalists why it's useful to normalize relations with Israel: "This normalization process has a lot to offer to us, to Israel, to Palestine, and also to the region. The region needs this." (December 14, 2015).<sup>17</sup> The reconciliation agreement between Ankara and Jerusalem (signed on June 28, 2016) is supposed to put an end to the crisis, and allow Israel to export gas to Turkey and through its territory to Europe. The deal with Turkey also lifts the Turkish veto of Israeli participation in NATO exercises.

However, on the Israeli side, there are no illusions that previous, pre-crisis levels of security and intelligence cooperation between Israel and Turkey will return quickly, if ever. Based on the loss of this cooperation with Ankara, and the need to secure the maritime gas fields and prepare to export the gas, Israel has in recent years worked to strengthen its ties with Greece and Cyprus, and rushed to assure their leaders that the agreement with Ankara would not affect their relations with Jerusalem.

## The Palestinian "Lone Wolf" Intifada –

The violent events that erupted in Jerusalem in October 2015 and quickly spread to Judea and Samaria and across Israel, have yet to fully subside. Israel is forced to face a relatively new phenomenon in which spontaneous acts of violence occur with no prior warning. The attackers do not identify or belong to organized terror groups, which makes the intelligence challenge to prevent these attacks especially difficult.

The frozen diplomatic process is not the sole culprit behind this wave of violence. Among Palestinian youth, there is a deep frustration with the emerging social reality, the corruption, and the barely functioning Palestinian leadership. As of September 2016, these attacks have taken 40 Israeli lives. According to the IDF chief of staff (January 18, 2016), of the roughly 200 terrorist attacks, 100 had no prior intelligence or warning.<sup>18</sup> The military chiefs are urging Israelis that terrorists be differentiated from the rest of the Palestinian population, which should be allowed a normal life routine, including the continued employment

of about 120,000 Palestinians in Israel and Israeli industrial parks in the West Bank. The military is opposed to collective punishment and is interested in maintaining security cooperation and coordination with the Palestinian Security Forces.

The incident in Hebron in which an Israeli soldier shot and killed a wounded terrorist who was on the ground (after he had attacked another soldier) sparked a serious debate and exposed deep cracks in the Israeli consensus, which widely supports the military, on the use of force. The appointment of Avigdor Lieberman as defense minister was met with high tensions among IDF heads given his past militant comments, especially his characterization of the way the IDF handles the war on terror as “failed manner,” and his protest appearance alongside the accused soldier in military court.

### **The Palestinian Arena**

The Palestinian public in the West Bank is disappointed by the conduct of the Palestinian Authority and is doubtful as to its ability to bring about significant change and end the Israeli occupation. This atmosphere of frustration – especially among young Palestinians – helped prompt the outbreak of the “Lone Wolf” Intifada.

Israel's chief of military intelligence, Maj. General Herzi Halevi, briefing a cabinet meeting,<sup>19</sup> explained that the leadership of the Palestinian Authority is having difficulty influencing these young Palestinians “as they feel deeply alienated from them.” The functioning of the Palestinian system is affected by the expected change of

leadership, given Abu Mazen's advanced age (81). If the next president is not chosen through general elections, his leadership could be seen as lacking public legitimacy, his authority hobbled from the start. The consensus scenario points to a decision making process conducted in the senior institutions of the Fatah party with the expected involvement of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It is not yet clear if Mohammad Dahlan, currently exiled by Fatah, will move to capture the leadership seat. It may be that his path to future Palestinian leadership could be paved under pressure from Cairo. Israel must prepare for the possibility of a chaotic period that could negatively affect the day-to-day functioning of the Palestinian Authority, the effectiveness of the Palestinian Security Forces and the quality of cooperation with Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu has made it clear that Israel is not interested in the dissolution of the Palestinian Authority, but it needs to prepare for such a possibility.<sup>20</sup>

The frozen diplomatic process and lack of American leadership have left the Israeli-Palestinian conflict open to international initiatives. France continues to advance its plan for an international conference in Paris meant to revive the peace process. As a first step, France convened a meeting of foreign ministers from interested countries without Israeli or Palestinian participation. Despite misgivings, U.S. secretary of State Kerry partook in the meeting (June 3, 2016). The French initiative won the support of the Palestinians, who acquiesced to the French request that it suspended a planned move in the UN Security Council, which sought to denounce continued settlement building and demand its cessation.<sup>21</sup> Israel expressed opposition

to the French effort. The Prime Minister's Office explained (April 28, 2016) that "Israel is committed to its position that the best way to solve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is direct bi-lateral negotiations... Israel is prepared to start direct negotiations with the Palestinians immediately and with no preconditions. Any other diplomatic initiative pushes the Palestinians away from the table and from direct negotiations." To Israel's displeasure, the foreign ministers announced their intent to organize an international peace conference by the end of 2016.

**The lack of direct negotiations motivates the international community to make Israel uncomfortable**

The international impatience with the frozen peace process was expressed in the latest report of the Quartet (July 1, 2016), which warns of losing the chance to achieve a two-state solution as a result of the frozen peace process, continued settlement

construction, and Israel's annexation of Area C. The Quartet members (the United States, Russia, the EU, and the UN) demanded, in parallel, an end to Palestinian incitement.

Israel is cautious that the French move could pave the way for a UNSC resolution that would determine the principles of a final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Many commentators have suggested that President Obama may refrain from invoking the U.S. veto of such a Security Council move, and might even support it, if it is raised after

the upcoming presidential elections. At this time, President Obama is cautious of harming Clinton's chances of election. "The window of opportunity," according to this logic, will open up for Obama between the elections (November 8, 2016) and the swearing in of his successor (January 20, 2017). The president's advisors are divided between those pushing for a UNSC move, and those recommending instead a speech that would spell out the president's positions with respect to the principles of a permanent agreement.

The final decision will be left, of course, to President Obama, but may be influenced by the diplomatic freeze between Israel and the Palestinians. A significant diplomatic process would, however, decrease the likelihood of UN action. And so, the lack of a diplomatic process and direct negotiations between the sides motivates the international community to take steps and make comments uncomfortable for Israel. Thus, the EU adopted guidelines to label products from the settlements in EU based retail stores (November 11, 2015). This is happening despite growing doubts around the world about the willingness and credibility of the Palestinian Authority, and despite that the Palestinian issue has been pushed off the agenda of many relevant parties in the region and around the world.

The issue that draws the greatest level of criticism toward Israel is settlement construction. Secretary Kerry claims that "continuing settlement growth raises honest questions about Israel's long-term intentions."<sup>22</sup> UN Secretary

General Ban Ki-Moon called on Israel to refrain from settlement construction and added that “human nature” will resist occupation, and that continued construction in settlements is “offensive to the Palestinian people and international community,” and raises questions about the “Israeli commitment to a two-state solution.”<sup>23</sup> Then British Prime Minister David Cameron said that “settlement construction in East Jerusalem is appalling,” (February 24, 2016). The German weekly “Der Spiegel,” in an article entitled “Skepticism of German-Israeli Friendship Growing in Berlin,” wrote that German Chancellor Angela Merkel is seriously concerned by Israel’s settlement policy, which is making a two-state solution impossible, and that Merkel and her foreign minister are certain that any solution other than a two-state solution will turn Israel into an “apartheid state.”

Even U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro didn’t mince words when raising the issue: “We are concerned and perplexed by Israel’s strategy on settlements. This government and previous Israeli governments have repeatedly expressed their support for a negotiated two-state solution — a solution that would involve both mutual recognition and separation. Yet separation will become more and more difficult if Israel plans to continue to expand the footprint of settlements... the question we ask is a simple one: what is Israel’s strategy?” Israel is aware that there is an international atmosphere of frustration regarding the frozen Israeli-Palestinian peace process. There is worry about an escalation, and a desire to set a political horizon in the form of parameters to

a peace agreement. In opposition to this, Israel is placing its hope in a “regional initiative” to be led by Egypt. The convergence of interests between Israel and the Arab world has never been higher, which may open a diplomatic space for finding a solution to the Palestinian issue. The chances of such an initiative are dependent upon, of course, Israel’s willingness to make significant political compromises (freezing settlement construction outside the blocs, etc.).

### **The Relationship with the United States and the Triangle’s Resilience**

The period of Obama’s presidency signaled worrying trends regarding the future of U.S.-Israel relations, the depth of support for Israel, and an emerging foreign policy doctrine that does not necessarily align with Israeli government policies. Opinions are split as to what extent these trends will continue to define the U.S. approach to Israel and American foreign policy in the future. The answer to this question will greatly impact the resilience of the triangular relationship: Jerusalem – Washington – the U.S. Jewish community.

Israel has become a partisan issue in the United States in recent years. The Pew Research Center determined that in relation to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a majority of Americans remain on Israel’s side (54 percent vs 19 percent). However, support for Israel diminishes significantly among

**Israel is placing its hope in a "regional initiative" to be led by Egypt**

liberal Democrats. Forty percent of them support the Palestinians while 33 percent support Israel. The change in this faction – which is gaining strength within the Democratic party – in taking the Palestinian side has doubled since 2014 (21 percent vs 40 percent).<sup>24</sup> Other political decisions and the overall direction taken by Israel also influence Americans' view of it. Thus, the *Washington Post* published an editorial against the NGO Bill (January 2, 2016) entitled "A Danger to Israeli Democracy," in which it warned of an erosion of democratic values in Israel.<sup>25</sup> Even the State Department's spokesperson released a public statement regarding this bill (July 12, 2016) saying that the U.S. is "very concerned by the potential impacts of this legislation."<sup>26</sup>

Ambassador Dan Shapiro, questioned the manner in which Israel relates to the harming of Palestinians, "At times there seem to be two standards of adherence to the rule of law: one for Israelis and another for Palestinians"<sup>27</sup> (January 18, 2016).

American Jewish leaders have expressed concern about the erosion of a consensus in America that there is a deep foundation of shared core values at the base of the special relationship with Israel. They warn that the statement: "This isn't the Israel we knew" is heard more and more frequently, and that this fuels de-legitimization and calls for boycotts against Israel, especially among young liberals.

The Obama administration doubts the Israeli government's commitment to the vision of a two-state solution. This is the case despite Netanyahu clarification in a meeting with Obama (November

9, 2015): "I remain committed to the vision of two states for two peoples with a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes Israel as the Jewish state."<sup>28</sup> Secretary of State Kerry warned at the "Saban Forum" (December 5, 2015) of a deterioration toward the reality of one state without a Jewish majority, and called on Netanyahu to prove his support for a two-state solution is "not just a slogan." Following Israeli announcements on settlement expansion beyond the 1967 lines, the State Department spokesperson harshly criticized Israel (July 28 2016), noting the "provocative" actions that "are the latest examples of what appears to be a steady acceleration of settlement activity that is systematically undermining the prospects for a two- state solution."<sup>29</sup>

The Israeli-American agenda remains packed with significant issues, even in the final months of Obama's presidency. A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Israel and the United States for defense aid over the coming decade was signed (September 14, 2016), following a difficult negotiation period, during which Netanyahu had said: "Perhaps we will not succeed in achieving an agreement with the current administration and will need to reach an agreement with the next administration." 33 Israel explained that its defense needs are growing due to weaknesses in the nuclear agreement, the lifting of sanctions on Iran and the thawing of tens of billions of frozen dollars that will allow Iran to increase its subversive behavior in the region and allow it to continue arming Hezbollah. Meanwhile, Arab states are purchasing advanced arms in light of the Iranian threat that could, eventually, be turned against Israel. Additionally, Islamic terror is

creeping up on Israel's borders, while the threat of ballistic missiles aimed at Israel grows.

According to the MOU, Israel will receive a sum of USD 38 billion over ten years (2019-2028). Israel commits to not appeal to Congress for additional funding for defense expenditures, and even commits to return any funding Congress appropriates without the administration's approval. Israel will also gradually reduce the 26 percent of the defense aid that it can currently direct toward Israeli defense industries. Critics of the MOU claim that Israel would have been spared these harsh limitations were Prime Minister Netanyahu more careful in his relationship with President Obama, and had he avoided conflicts with him. According to them, the nominal growth in the agreement (from USD 3.5 billion per year in the previous decade to USD 3.8 billion per year for the next decade) does not make up for the decline in the value of the dollar and increasing prices for weapons systems. The agreement's supporters, however, claim that the United States has never granted such a large sum of defense aid to any other nation, and that the deal ensures the continuation of the special relationship with the United States that is critical to Israel's resilience.

Following the signing of the MOU, perhaps the issue of greatest controversy relates to the possibility that President Obama may withhold the U.S. veto – and maybe even promote – a UNSC resolution that would define the parameters of a final agreement between Israelis and Palestinians (discussed in the previous section).

President Obama will likely leave certain decisions

on a range of issues related to Israel to his successor, each of which requires a deep strategic dialogue between the two countries:

- Will the view in Washington that the Middle East is less important define the next president's foreign policy?
- If and how does the U.S. intend to rebuild the trust it has lost in the eyes of many in the Middle East?
- How will the U.S. ensure strict enforcement and verification over Iran's compliance with the terms of the nuclear agreement?
- How will Washington react to defiant behavior by Iran in areas not covered by the nuclear agreement?
- Does the U.S. wish to remain dominant in defining Syria's future so that it doesn't turn into a forward base for Iran and anti-Israel jihadist elements?
- How will the U.S. conduct its campaign against ISIS: will it continue the current strategy, influenced by a reluctance to embark on another ground campaign in the Middle East, or will it employ a more aggressive strategy to hasten the defeat of ISIS?
- How will the next administration handle the balance of power between Iran and Saudi Arabia? Will it continue to grant legitimacy to Iran's desire to be a regional power at the expense of Saudi Arabia and the Sunni camp?
- Will the next administration continue to promote cooperation with Egypt, or will relations cool based on its discomfort with the

regime's retreat from democratic values and human rights?

- Will the next American administration continue to significantly support Jordan to ensure its stability?
- Will the next administration try to grant momentum to the emerging relationship between Israel and the moderate Sunni states?
- How will the next administration prepare for the expected leadership change in the Palestinian Authority?

- Will the next administration seek to lead a renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace process, or will it accept the "internationalization" of efforts to reach a solution to the conflict?

### **From an historical perspective, Israel is almost a strategic miracle**

Jerusalem's ability to conduct a strategic dialogue on these issues in order to achieve positive results (from its perspective) depends on Israel's willingness to fulfill – at least in part – some of Washington's expectations. Ambassador Shapiro expressed this in a piercing question: "What tools can Israel provide to assist us in our global diplomatic defense of Israel, to which we will always be committed?" (January 18, 2016).

### **Summary: Has Israel's Strategic Position Improved or Worsened?**

Assessing Israel's strategic position cannot be

reduced to a current situational snapshot. It must relate to developments with roots in the past, and current trends that will shape Israel's future.

From an historical perspective, Israel is almost a strategic miracle. This year it celebrated the 68th anniversary of its founding, after close to 2000 years of Jewish exile. The 650,000 Jews that lived in the state at its founding has grown 10 fold (6.377 million Jews today). Israel is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> on the World Happiness Index, its population growth rate is the highest in the developed world, its life expectancy is very high (5<sup>th</sup> in the world for men, and 9<sup>th</sup> for women). Israel's GDP per capita (37,000 dollars) surpasses that of Italy and Spain. Israel's hi-tech sector is world-class and global hi-tech giants maintain R&D centers in Israel. Gas fields discovered off Israel's coast promise a domestic energy supply for years to come and are turning Israel into a natural gas exporter. Exports to Asia grew three fold over the past decade, reaching 17 billion dollars in 2014. Chinese investments in Israel grew from 70 million dollars in 2010 to 2.7 billion dollars in 2014. The growing trade with Asia is not dependent on a peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Relations with India have been growing fast since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2014 election victory. Israeli arms industries are the second most important supplier to India. In mid-October 2015, India's president made his first visit to Israel.

The peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt remain stable despite regional instability (the agreement with Egypt even withstood the Muslim Brotherhood's rule from 2012 to 2013). Given

Iran's subversion, jihadi terror, and the appearance of ISIS, the convergence of interests between Israel and the moderate Sunni states increases. A retired Saudi general even visited Israel to advance the Arab Peace Initiative, which caused Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, to warn (July 30, 2016) that "the move from secret to public relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel is the worst thing as far as the official Arab position is concerned."<sup>37</sup> Security cooperation with Egypt is better than ever. The United Arab Emirates announced (November 27, 2015) that an Israeli representative office will open in Abu Dhabi to manage the relationship with the UN International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit in early July 2016 to four African countries (Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia) and the summit meeting he convened with leaders of these countries and the heads of South Sudan, Zambia, and Tanzania, reflects the continent's openness to strengthening economic, diplomatic, and security ties with Israel. The announcement of renewed diplomatic relations with Guinea (July 20, 2016) was an example of this.

Following the collapse of Syria and Iraq, there is no longer a conventional military threat posed to Israel. Syria's chemical weapons were dismantled, and at least in the near term, Iran's efforts to achieve a nuclear weapon have been pushed back. Foreign media attributes to Israel not just membership in the nuclear club but also a second-strike capability. Israel's military and economic power has translated into improved relations with Moscow. Prime Minister Netanyahu meets regularly with President Putin, and they conduct

critical coordination in light of Russia's military presence in Syria. Strategic relations are developing with Greece and Cyprus, and even Turkey's President Erdogan admits that his country "needs a country like Israel."

Even in the often hostile world of NGOs, Israel has had some achievements over the past year: the General Assembly of the IAEA rejected a proposal to force an international inspection regime on Israel's nuclear facilities (September 17, 2015). And for the first time in history, an Israeli ambassador was chosen to head the UN's Judiciary Committee (June 13, 2017).

While the positive data related to Israel's strategic standing are encouraging, they do not provide the complete picture. If the Middle East stabilizes, there is no guarantee that the new reality will continue to be comfortable for Israel. Important regional powers like Iran and Turkey will likely play an increasingly influential role, and have already shown their potential to be hostile to Israel. Facing the threat of terror groups operating from the territory of failing states, and who take cover in civilian areas, continues to present a significant security challenge, especially if the central rule in additional countries around Israel collapses.

**Israel currently faces no conventional military threats**

The support of the free world for Israel could decrease if it is seen as abandoning liberal democratic values and as increasing its grip on the West Bank. Relations with Russia, China, and India,

as deep as they may become, are no replacement for the strategic ties to the United States. There is no base of common foundational values, and, more importantly, they lack the essential asset that is the American Jewish community.

This strategic reality along with the frictions that arose during the Obama administration, make it crystal clear that the most important task of the Israeli government is to “open a new chapter” with the incoming American administration and focus its efforts on revitalizing the special relationship.

However, the strategic standing of any state is not only a function of its relative strength in the regional or global arena. Internal data about the state of the economy, scientific advancements, educational levels, social solidarity, and more are critical in assessing strategic strength. There is another important factor that could, in the long term, become decisive: the danger of Israel becoming a bi-national state and losing its Jewish character. The security component of this threat was expressed by IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eizenkot: “There are 161 settlements in Judea and Samaria. Some 400,000 residents among 2 million Palestinians. The population is mixed, which creates a great operational challenge.”<sup>38</sup> The need to vacate settlers as part of a final peace agreement acts as a significant deterrent for Israeli decision makers.

Despite that the religious and ideological connection to Judea and Samaria is significantly higher than toward the Gaza Strip, the disengagement, the evacuation 8,600 people, was terribly traumatic for Israeli society. As the years go by without a final agreement, or policies limiting the settlement vision to the established blocs,

the number of Jews living in territory intended for a Palestinian state only grows. The number of Jews living outside the blocs stands at 80,000 (about 125,000 if you count those living in the Ariel-Kdumim bloc situated deep in Palestinian territory). In the past five years, the number of Jews in these areas grew by about 2500 a year. The significance is that the number of Jews who will need to vacate the settlements if a Palestinian state is formed is nine times that of Gaza. It's clear, that as we move forward, the chances that an Israeli leader will make the decision to evacuate such a large and growing number of settlers diminishes.

Israel is moving toward a reality in which a Jewish critical mass is being created outside of the blocs, which will preclude any agreement that divides the land. The lost chance to attain an independent state could push the Palestinians to demand equal rights within a single bi-national state, and even the best of Israel's friends would be sympathetic to this. Israel risks losing the Jewish identity of the state. The “Lone Wolf” Intifada that erupted in Jerusalem reflects the reality of a bi-national city, filled with hostility and violence. Today, 63 percent of Jerusalem's 830,000 residents are Jewish. If Jerusalem's Arab residents ever decide to exercise their voting rights and participate in municipal elections, there will be no guarantee that the administration of Israel's capital city will remain in Jewish hands.

The current strategic period, in which Israel does not face existential threats as it has in the past, is a fitting time to craft an effective plan for dealing with the long-term strategic threat to the Jewish state's very identity – that it will gradually become a bi-national state.

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# 5

## State-Level Anti-BDS Legislative Initiatives – Overview and Recommendations

While the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, as a part of a wider effort to delegitimize Israel, has been active and growing since 2005, the past year saw the emergence of a new trend in this dynamic – state-level anti-BDS legislative initiatives in the United States that either practically block BDS efforts or take a strong public position against them.

However, while these initiatives are important, the pro-Israel community should not view them as a panacea to the challenge presented by the BDS movement. That is, since it does not address the underlying problem of the very battle and debate over the narrative of Israel's legitimacy, of which BDS is an important part of the anti-Israel tool kit. If utilized properly, these efforts can however offer a cushion of breathing space for pro-Israel activists in order to re-establish the narrative around Israel's legitimacy.

### Overview of the Legislative Initiatives <sup>1</sup>

There are, at time of writing, 11 U.S. states that have passed some sort of pro-Israel or anti-BDS legislation, one state (New York) with an executive order, and a number of states that are in various stages of the legislative process. Three more states passed non-Israel specific anti-discrimination laws that, in practice, help block BDS (although defending Israel sits at the heart of these), while one more state's legislature passed such a law, and is awaiting its respective governor's signature

There are essentially four different legislative models in play, with slight differences from state to state:

1. **Binding and punitive** legislation that prohibits the state from entering into contracts with companies that boycott Israel or divest from it.

2. **Binding and punitive** legislation that divests state pension funds from companies that divest from Israel.
3. **Generic binding and punitive** anti-discrimination legislation aimed at those who boycott American allies and trade partners by barring the state from entering into contracts with any entity that boycotts "based on race, color, religion, gender or national origin".
4. **Non-binding and declarative** anti-BDS resolutions that express support for Israel and condemn the BDS movement, without taking concrete action.

We note that some states have combined certain legislative models or have first introduced the non-binding resolution and later the punitive legislation. Many of the Israel-specific legislation efforts refer to Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East and a U.S. ally and trade partner. Many clearly state that BDS seeks to de-legitimize Israel's existence. Some note that the boycott enterprise leads directly to a "climate of intimidation, fear and violence on campuses throughout America" and helps to spread anti-Semitism, and would be "damaging (to) the cause of peace, justice, equality, democracy and human rights." Some of the states that have passed generic anti-discrimination legislation specifically mention Israel as a key ally and trade partner, either in the text itself or in the press release announcing the legislation.

Advocates note that it is realistic to expect that anti-BDS or anti-discriminatory legislation will pass in 10 or more states throughout 2017.

## Legislative Efforts on the National and International Level

On the federal level, the pro-Israel Combatting BDS Act of 2016 has been introduced in Congress,<sup>2</sup> which would support the states' efforts thus far, and proactively block federal level challenges to them.<sup>3</sup> Last year, President Obama signed into law a broader trade bill that included anti-BDS provisions.<sup>4</sup>

Internationally, a number of countries and major cities have come out against BDS: Canada passed an anti-BDS resolution earlier this year<sup>5</sup>; the UK is considering banning BDS action against Israel, and France banned discrimination based on national origin back in 2003.<sup>6</sup> Earlier this year, the city of Paris passed further anti-BDS resolutions.<sup>7</sup>

## Behind the Scenes – Advocates and Opponents

These legislative efforts are largely grassroots in nature, often initiated by pro-Israel legislators seeking to defend Israel as a key U.S. ally and the sole democracy in a restive region, at a time when it is increasingly under attack, especially on campuses. Many of them have noted a connected spike in anti-Semitic acts and sentiments. They sometimes reach out to foster cooperation with the local Jewish and pro-Israel community. Of course, in some cases, it is the pro-Israel community that initiates the contact. These include groups like the Israel Action Network (IAN), The Israel Project (TIP), The American Jewish Committee (AJC), Stand With Us, the Israel Allies Foundation as well as Christian groups such as

Christians United for Israel (CUFI) and Proclaiming Justice to the Nations. There are also a number of prominent think-tanks and legal experts ensuring the constitutionality of these efforts. On the local level, legislators often work with JCRC's (Jewish Community Relations Councils) and Jewish federations. These organizations provide resources, tool-kits and expertise to local activists who generally liaison with state-level legislators. They also provide assistance in coalition building and ascertaining which model would be most appropriate for that state.

In large part, the bills have passed with bi-partisan support and with overwhelming majorities. Some have noted that in states that have yet to pass or failed to pass legislation, it is less due to opposition than to legislative priorities, schedules, or procedures. Some states don't wish to get involved in matters they see as divisive (Israeli-Palestinian conflict), or in foreign affairs generally. Pro-BDS groups have attempted to claim these delays as their own successes.

The success of these legislative efforts has taken the BDS movement by surprise, and some experts say it has placed it in a confused, defensive, and reactive position.

### **Constitutional and Legal Questions**

Main opposition, thus far, has been relatively minor and uncoordinated, and has come from pro-BDS groups like Jewish Voice for Peace, the Methodist Church in some states, minority groups in certain areas, Palestine Legal, and the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union).

The main critique of these opponents thus far has been that they limit First Amendment rights. As noted, the pro-Israel community has employed the use of think-tanks and legal experts to ensure the constitutionality of such efforts.

As Northwestern University Law Professor Eugene Kontorovich explains:<sup>8</sup>

"None of these laws ban or punish criticism of Israel, or stops anyone from boycotting Israel. They apply solely to businesses that contract with or get investment money from state governments. These laws simply say: If you want the state to do business with you, you need to abide by the state's policies of sound and fair business practices, including anti-discrimination rules. These laws are not about speech or viewpoints. They are about unfair and discriminatory business decisions. And whether one agrees or not with such laws as a policy matter, there is no question they do not pose a First Amendment problem."

Kontorovich further points to a "well-established Supreme Court precedent" saying that, "...states can choose not to do business with companies they regard as ... discriminatory."

While a business or organization is free to criticize Israel and even engage in boycott activities, the state is similarly free to disassociate itself from them.

Of the pro-Israel organizations, all of whom oppose BDS, only the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has refrained from supporting these legislative efforts,<sup>9</sup> noting they may infringe on First Amendment rights.

## Implications and Dilemmas

On the symbolic level, these Anti-BDS efforts send a clear message that the states, with broad bi-partisan backing, either support Israel or are, in principle, against discriminatory action and language.

On the practical level, these efforts are accomplishing two main things. First, they keep anti-Israel activists busy. A key element of the BDS movement's strategy has been to continuously press new anti-Israel initiatives. This places

**These Anti-BDS efforts send a clear message that the states, with broad bi-partisan backing, support Israel and are against discriminatory action and language**

Israel supporters on the defensive, having to explain why Israel is **not** committing genocide or apartheid or ethnic cleansing, or any one of a number of other loaded accusations

Moreover, these initiatives provide an out for companies that have been pressured into divesting from Israel having never wished to do so.

Moreover, These laws, in at least one instance, even

snatched away a false propaganda victory from the BDS movement. For example the BDS movement had claimed it caused the British security firm G4S to pull out of Israel after a long and arduous harassment campaign. But having to answer to the state of Illinois lest it lose state contracts, G4S eventually clarified that not only was it not pulling

out of Israel but it intends to remain there for the foreseeable future.<sup>10</sup>

There are some ongoing debates as to the most effective model. One relates to whether legislative language should be explicitly anti-BDS and pro-Israel or if general anti-discrimination legislation is preferable. Israel-specific legislation provides important public support for Israel at a time when it is under attack on campuses and progressive groups and helps shore up public opinion that a bi-partisan majority supports Israel. However, this runs the risk of further encouraging the image among minority and progressive groups that Israel is indeed a key issue of intersectionality, and that, by extension, Jews are a privileged group. This is especially true in states with large minority and progressive communities, and where support for Israel might be lower. This also runs the risk of increasing public awareness of the BDS movement, something critical to its growth strategy.

Other issues are becoming clearer however. Binding legislation seems more preferable to non-binding resolutions. Within this category, states that include pension fund divestment and prohibiting state contracts are preferable. It is important to note, however, that some states' pension funds are complex to the point legislators would prefer not to touch them. In such states, it is best to defer to local legal and financial experts regarding this issue.

## Seeing the Bigger Picture – the Limitations of anti-BDS Legislation

It is important to recognize that although these successes are important, they should not distract Israel supporters from the larger issue. Many (including some BDS supporters) are mistaken in thinking that the struggle is a limited one surrounding BDS campaigns and the damage they could cause to Israel's economy – i.e. that enough economic damage will convince Israel to change its policies. However, these initiatives cannot alone defeat anti-Israel activists.

As noted, the real achievement is that these legislative initiatives, in blocking a key tool from the anti-Israel activist's arsenal, force the BDS movement into a reactive position, and provide a cushion of breathing space for pro-Israel activists.

In this crucial time, it is imperative that the pro-Israel community, including the Government of Israel, work diligently, cooperatively, proactively and creatively to reclaim and reframe the positive narrative surrounding Israel's legitimacy.

### Policy Recommendations

1. The success of these efforts and the momentum they create must be utilized within the context of a wider and long-term strategy to reclaim the narrative of Israel's legitimacy.
2. We recommend expanding legislative efforts to as many states as possible, as much as it depends on pro-Israel advocates.

3. However, we recommend taking a "quality over quantity" approach. It is crucial to invest appropriate coalition building and outreach efforts to ensure bi-partisan and overwhelming support. A defeat in any state could be costly, and so no legislation is preferable to defeated legislation and possibly even to one that only narrowly passes.
4. Coordination between Israel advocacy groups is crucial. Lack of progress is often attributable to insufficient coordination among and between national level groups, local groups and state legislators. While binding legislations are preferable, the inclusion of state pension funds should be left up to the state as it is a complex matter that goes beyond support for Israel. Similarly, whether a state legislation is Israel specific or general should be decided on a state-by-state basis and in consultation with local actors.
5. One of the key messaging successes has been correctly labeling BDS as an anti-Israel and even anti-Jewish hate movement, rather than the human rights movement it tries to bill itself as.

**The real achievement is that the initiatives force BDS into a reactive position. The pro-Israel community must reclaim and reframe the positive narrative surrounding Israel's legitimacy**

6. Federal legislation currently working its way through Congress should be proactively supported.
7. The Government of Israel should tread lightly and stay behind the scenes. The various pro-Israel groups in the United States and the U.S. Jewish community should continue taking the lead.

## **Annex: Breakdown of Current State-Level Legislative Initiatives (as of September 2016)**

### **Israel-specific binding legislation**

1. Illinois was the first to enact such legislation as Governor Bruce Rauner signed the bill on July 24, 2015.<sup>11</sup> The bill was approved unanimously, and creates a blacklist of companies who boycott Israel, requiring divestment of state pension funds.
2. Florida's bill was approved by Governor Rick Scott on March 10, 2016.<sup>12</sup> It creates a blacklist of companies boycotting Israel and prohibits public entities from entering state contracts with these on contracts worth USD 1 million or more. It also prohibits state pension funds from investing in such companies. This passed the Florida House 112-2 and the Florida Senate 38-0. Florida also passed a non-binding resolution<sup>13</sup> earlier that month.
3. Arizona Governor Doug Ducey signed into law this anti-BDS legislation on March 17, 2016,<sup>14</sup> after it passed the Arizona House 42-16 and the Senate 23-6. Like Florida, Arizona mandates creating a blacklist of companies and organizations that boycott Israel, and then prohibits state institutions from investing in such bodies. It similarly prohibits entering state contracts with entities that boycott Israel. The bill relates to the general importance of opposing discrimination based on national origins.
4. Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper signed the bill into law on March 18, 2016.<sup>15</sup> Colorado's law will require the state's pension funds to create a blacklist of boycotting entities and divest pension funds from these, as well as prohibit future investments. It passed 54-10. The 10 dissenters were Democrats. We should also note that much of the opposition in Colorado had to do with the politicization of the state's pension funds, and not specifically related to Israel. This bill is the only Israel-specific one that relates to "Israel's internationally recognized boundaries" and does not extend to territories beyond the 1967 lines.
5. Indiana Governor Mike Pence signed the bill into law on March 23, 2016,<sup>16</sup> which requires state pension funds to divest from companies that boycott, sanction or divest from Israel or businesses that operate in Israel. The Indiana law requires creating a blacklist of such companies and submitting regular reports to the legislative council. This was approved with bi-partisan backing and a 47-3 majority. Indiana had previously passed a non-binding resolution in support of Israel.<sup>17</sup>

6. Georgia Governor Nathan Deal signed the Georgia legislation into law on April 26, 2016.<sup>18</sup> It forbids the state from contracting with individuals or companies that boycott Israel, and creates a blacklist of such companies. The bi-partisan bill passed the Senate 41-8 and the House 95-71, perhaps making Georgia the state with the greatest opposition we have yet seen.
7. Iowa's anti-BDS legislation was signed into law by Governor Terry Branstad on May 10, 2016.<sup>19</sup> It will create a blacklist of businesses in which state institutions would be prohibited from contracting and investing state funds. The bill passed the House 70-24 and the Senate 38-9, and will only be take relevance on future investments.
8. New York took a slightly different route as Governor Andrew Cuomo signed an executive anti-BDS order on June 9, 2016,<sup>20</sup> that will require state agencies to divest from companies and organizations aligned with the BDS movement. New York is the only state to have taken such action, although two bills are currently in motion, one of which is Israel specific<sup>21</sup> and the other binding but as regards all U.S. allies and trading partners,<sup>22</sup> both of which are expected to pass in the coming months.
9. New Jersey's Senate passed bipartisan legislation on June 28, 2016,<sup>23</sup> which Governor Chris Christie signed on August 16, 2016.<sup>24</sup> The law will prohibit state pension and annuity funds from being invested in companies that boycott Israel or Israeli businesses. This bill

passed the senate unanimously 39-0 and the general assembly 69-3.

### **Binding, non-Israel Specific Legislation**

1. South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley signed anti-BDS legislation into law on June 4, 2015,<sup>25</sup> one of the first states to do so. The legislation is not Israel-specific, rather it bars public entities from contracting with companies that boycott "based on race, color, religion, gender or national origin," and references companies with whom South Carolina enjoys open trade. The bill, backed by pro-Israel organizations, passed the house 97-1 and the senate 44-0.
2. Alabama Governor Robert Bentley signed into law legislation on May 10, 2016,<sup>26</sup> prohibiting a public entity in the state from contracting with business and non-profit organizations that engage in boycotts that discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender or national origin, and with countries with whom Alabama enjoys open trade. The bill passed the house 84-5 and the senate 30-0. Earlier this year, in February, Alabama passed a non-binding resolution<sup>27</sup> condemning the BDS movement and affirming its support for Israel.
3. California Governor Jerry Brown signed the "anti-BDS bill", or Assembly Bill 2844 into law on September 24, 2016.<sup>28</sup> This was, after the State Assembly approved an updated anti-discrimination bill (60-0) less than a month before,<sup>29</sup> and after a long and complicated legislative process. The legislation will force companies that accept a state government

contract over USD 100,000 to verify that they are not in violation of California's civil rights laws. This bill in its current form is not specific to Israel (although Israel is the only country mentioned specifically) rather reinforces existing regulations in California. It does, however, draw a direct connection between BDS and anti-Semitism, noting "discriminatory actions taken against individuals of the Jewish faith under the pretext of a constitutionally protected boycott... of ...Israel."

4. Rhode Island's General Assembly passed (63-4) this anti-discrimination bill on June 16, 2016.<sup>30</sup> It is currently in the State Senate and Governor Gina Raimondo is expected to sign it into law. The law would prohibit the state from contracting with companies that engage in boycotts of U.S. allies and those with whom the state enjoys open trade. While the bill itself does not mention Israel, the press statement put out by Rhode Island Rep. Mia Ackerman, one of the bill's sponsors, makes direct mention of Israel: "One of our greatest trading allies is the state of Israel, the only democratic, non-discriminatory country in the Middle East." The press statement also mentions that boycotting Israel could harm the state's economy.

### Non-binding anti-BDS resolutions

1. Tennessee passed a non-binding resolution condemning the BDS movement, the first state to do so, on April 21, 2015.<sup>31</sup> Although the legislation does not order Tennessee public institutions to "divest from entities

involved in boycotting Israel, it refers to BDS as "one of the main vehicles for spreading anti-Semitism and advocating the elimination of the Jewish state." This resolution passed 123-1 in the General Assembly and passed the Senate unanimously.

2. Pennsylvania's General Assembly<sup>32</sup> and Senate<sup>33</sup> both passed non-binding anti-BDS resolutions on June 24, 2015,<sup>34</sup> with bi-partisan and unanimous support. The Pennsylvania legislature is currently discussing three different binding anti-BDS resolutions (see below).
3. Virginia's legislature passed a non-binding anti-BDS resolution on March 9, 2016.<sup>35</sup> This passed the House 86-5 with 9 abstentions, and passed the Senate with a voice vote. Virginia is working to pass a binding anti-BDS law<sup>36</sup> (see below).

### States with Resolutions and Legislation Under Discussion

Currently, states with efforts in earlier stages include: **Oklahoma**<sup>37</sup> (non-binding resolution condemning BDS and reaffirming support for Israel); **Ohio**<sup>38</sup> (binding legislation that would prohibit state contracts with companies that boycott Israel); **Massachusetts**<sup>39</sup> (legislation that would divest pension funds from companies that boycott Israel – although not likely to happen in the coming year); **Maryland**<sup>40</sup> (a non-binding resolution supporting Israel and criticizing the BDS movement, although it might not pass and the end result may be a NY style executive

order); and **Pennsylvania** (see above - three bills introduced – one that would block state funding to academic institutions that boycott Israel, one that would prohibit state contracts with entities that boycott Israel, and one that would divest state pension funds from Israel boycotters". As mentioned, **Pennsylvania** and **Virginia**, which passed non-binding resolutions, are also seeking to pass binding legislation.

Notably, anti-discrimination and anti-BDS bills in **Kansas**<sup>41</sup> and **Wisconsin**<sup>42</sup> (non-binding) failed to pass. These failures, however, seem to be more a result of procedural issues than substantive ones.

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40 Mondoweiss Editors. "Maryland coalition defeats anti-BDS bill in State Assembly." Mondoweiss. April 26, 2016. <http://mondoweiss.net/2016/04/maryland-coalition-defeats-anti-bds-bill-in-state-assembly/>

41 [http://kslegislature.org/li\\_2014/b2013\\_14/measures/hb2647/](http://kslegislature.org/li_2014/b2013_14/measures/hb2647/) and [http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2015\\_16/measures/hb2186/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2015_16/measures/hb2186/)

42 <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/proposals/ajr103>



# Comprehensive Three-Dimensional Index on anti-Semitism in Europe

## The need for an integrated indicator

In the shadow of a resurgence of Anti-Semitism in Europe, and in the light of EU governments' efforts to eradicate the phenomenon, there is a need for an integrative anti-Semitism Index that will provide Israeli policy-makers and world Jewry leaders with a policy tool to monitor developments, ease decision-making and assess efficacy of implemented interventions.

Existing measurement tools only provide partial perspectives, a single piece of anti-Semitism jigsaw puzzle. Some only examine public opinion. Others only check the number of incidents of violence or harassment against Jews. Occasionally, field studies examine how Jews themselves perceive anti-Semitism.

## A three-dimensional indicator

JPPI's anti-Semitism Index, presented here for the second year. This year we focus on Europe – aiming to measure the discomfort and threat levels of European Jewry. This integrated indicator, meant to be a tool for policy makers, relates to three complementary dimensions of anti-Semitism affecting individual Jews and communal Jewish life. Our integrative index utilizes the existing **Attitudes Toward Jews** Index compiled from data collected by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in cooperation with various research institutes, **anti-Semitic harassment** figures collected by local Jewish organizations entrusted with security (such as CST in UK, and SPCJ in France) <sup>1</sup>, and findings regarding **perceptions among Jews** of anti-Semitism

Table 1. Anti-Semitism in Western Europe 2015-2016	Trend	Europe average	France	UK	Germany
PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS JEWS					
Harbor anti-Semitic attitudes (%) <sup>2</sup>	▼	24 (26)	17 (37)	12 (8)	16 (27)
-- as above, among Muslims (%) <sup>3</sup>	▼	62 (55)	49 (83)	54	54 (62)
ANTI-SEMITIC BEHAVIOR (number of incidents; only as reported to official agencies) <sup>4</sup>					
Extreme violence (including terrorism)	▼▲		32 (2)	4 (41)	3 (4)
Assault	▼		66 (108)	82 (80)	18 (25)
Damage to property	▼		109 (131)	65 (81)	N/A
Total incidents (extreme violence, assaults, damages, desecrations and threats)	▼		1,015 (1,092)	912 (1,189)	740 (864)
Number of physical attacks per 1,000 Jews	▼		4 (5)	6 (8)	6 (7)
Per cent of attacks that are not reported <sup>5</sup>		77	72	73	72
ANTI-SEMITISM AS PERCEIVED BY JEWS <sup>6</sup>					
Have been personally assaulted (%)			11	5	
Anti-Semitism is a very or fairly big problem (%)		(67)	(86)	(48)	(25)
Have considered emigration because they do not feel safe in their country (%)	▲	(32)	80 (49)	(19)	(26)
Avoid places in their neighborhood because they would not feel safe there as a Jew (%)		(27)	(20)	(35)	(28)

Note: Most recent data available. Numbers in parenthesis are 2014 scores

## 1. European Jewish communities are at risk of further terror attacks

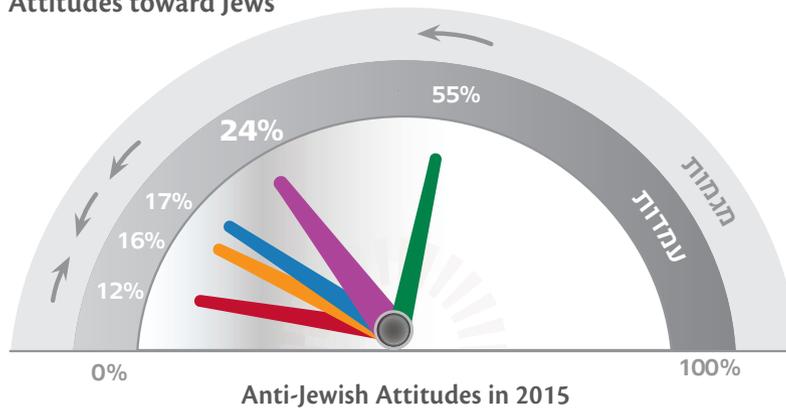
Thousands of Europe-born jihadists have fought in the Syrian civil war, and hundreds of them have returned to Europe. Moreover, among the million migrants who have arrived in Europe recently, it is suspected that there are several hundreds of trained jihadists who are setting up sleeping terror cells. On June 2016, the U.S. State Department warned Americans of the risk of potential terrorist attacks throughout Europe.<sup>7</sup> It is clear that in

recent terror attacks throughout Europe, Jews have been specifically targeted by jihadists. Security services put in place in several European Jewish communities were not designed to safeguard the many thousands of Jewish residences against terror, and do not have the capacity to do so.

## 2. Strong condemnations of anti-Semitism by top-level political leaders matter

We observe an increase of anti-Jewish sentiment in United Kingdom, while anti-Jewish attitudes

### Attitudes toward Jews



- Europe's Muslims ■
- Average Europe ■
- France ■
- Germany ■
- UK ■

Sources: ADL, Fondapol, CAA, WZB

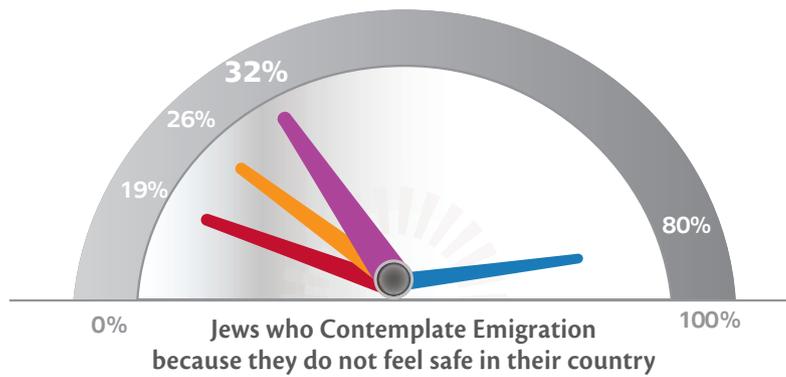
### Incidents



- Average Europe ■
- France ■
- Germany ■
- UK ■

Sources: Kantor Center, SPCJ, CST

### Perceptions among Jews



- Average Europe ■
- France ■
- Germany ■
- UK ■

Source: FRA European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, IPSOS, IFOP

and harassment dropped significantly in France and Germany.

There is no doubt that high-profile violence against Jews has fostered a sense of solidarity with the Jewish community. Strong condemnations of anti-Semitism by French PM Manuel Valls and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have been highly effective in their respective countries.

Israeli diplomats and political figures should encourage European political and top-level civic leaders to take a clear stand against anti-Semitism and demonstrate their commitment to the security of Jews. Declarations backed by visible acts are useful with respect to the three components of the index: (1) Anti-Semites get the message that expressing anti-Semitism is not acceptable; (2) Commitment to stand by the Jews and to vigorously pursue perpetrators deters

anti-Semitic acts; (3) Jews regain trust in their country's commitment to their security and feel comfortable as full citizens.

### 3. Despite the fact that there was no armed conflict in 2015, the level of anti-Jewish incidents remained similar to those of 2014

If until recently, anti-Semitic harassments were seen to spike mainly during Middle East armed conflicts with a subsequent sharp decline, today anti-Jewishness in Europe remains high even during years (such as 2015) without any armed conflict involving Israel and Palestinians. Beyond the fluctuations linked to external triggers, the trend line of anti-Semitic incidents, as illustrated in Figure 1, shows an overall ascent during the last 15 years. This is due to the fact that anti-Jewish violence, coming mainly from Europe-born Muslims, is now home-grown and endogenous.

**Figure 1: Anti-Semitic incidents in Britain and France**

Ascending trend line despite lack of warfare between Israel and Palestinians

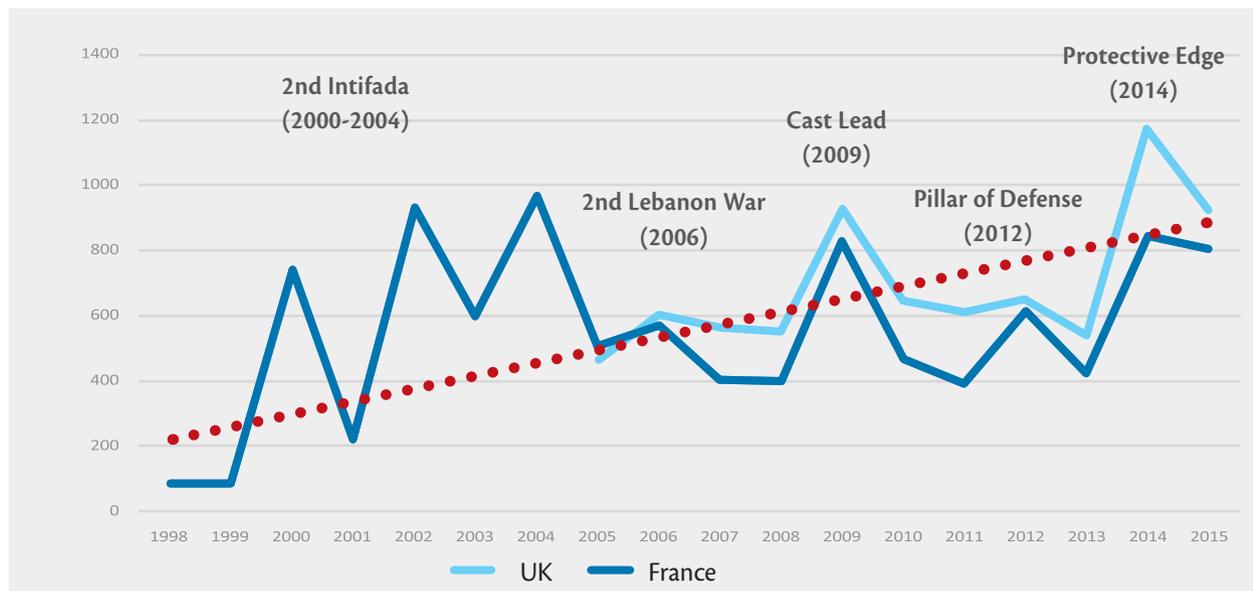
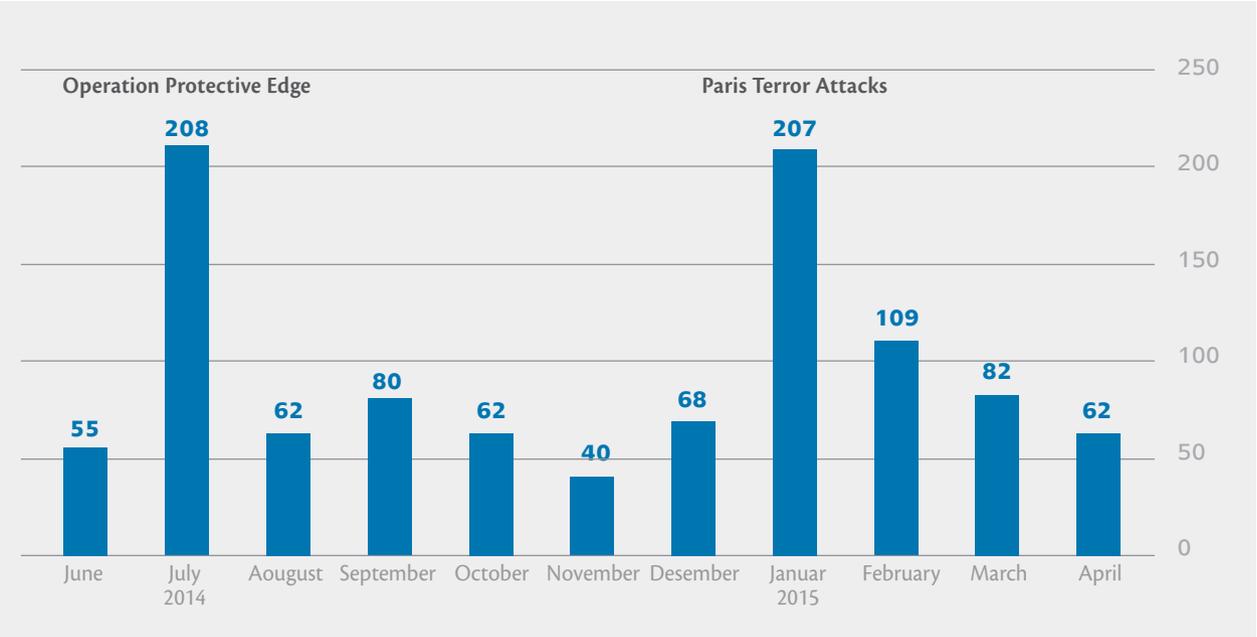


Figure 2 provides further insight into the emerging endogenous nature of anti-Jewish violence, in this case in France. After the end of the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict in 2014 and its spike in incidents, the level sloped steeply away from that high level. When compared to the level of incidents at the time of the Paris terror attacks in January 2015, a moderately high level of incidents continued for the two following months. This may be a harbinger of a growing difference not only between the number but also the nature and impacts of

endogenous and exogenous triggers. The decline was slower in returning to a baseline level after the January 2015 terror attack in a Parisian kosher supermarket than after Operation Protective Edge. The Paris massacre was perpetrated by French-born Jihadists and their action – especially after being celebrated as a glorious victory by global Jihadists – inspired local radicals. Without the French government’s steadfast reaction this wave of anti-Jewish harassments may have been prolonged even more.

**Figure 2: Anti-Semitic Incidents in France**

Comparing reactions to endogenous and exogenous triggers June 2014 - July 2015



## Implications – comparing French Jewry’s discomfort with British Jewry’s confidence

As we integrate the data of the three dimensions, an aggregating picture emerges. Despite a larger number of annual incidents per 1000 Jews in UK than in France, French Jews feel more anxiety than British Jews. Unlike British Jews, French Jews feel that anti-Semitic discourse has spread into the national mainstream public sphere and have lost confidence in the ability of the national government to control the Muslim minority. Indeed, following Manuel Valls’ unambiguous statements and concrete actions, French Jews started regaining confidence in the French government’s commitment to protect them. Nevertheless, they are worried about the persistence of anti-Semitic violence and are still cautious about the capability of the police and security to contain social and violent manifestations of anti-Semitism.<sup>8</sup> This discomfort fits with additional field survey findings. Following the 2015 terror attacks in Paris and Brussels, national surveys confirmed the spread of feelings of deep discomfort among French Jews and their heightened motivation to leave the country: 61 percent feel they “they would be more secure in Israel than in France” (for 40 percent of the general French population – Jews and non-Jews – expressed that “Jews are not safe in France”), while 80 percent of them “contemplate leaving the country” and half of them “consider Israel as their preferred destination.”<sup>9</sup>

## Endnotes

1 France: <http://www.antisemitisme.fr/dl/2015-EN.pdf>; UK : <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2016/02/04/cst-antisemitic-incidents-report-2015-published-today>; Germany : <http://kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/sites/default/files/Report2015-080516.pdf>; harassments in internet and literature are not included. They are reflected in the ADL index (attitudes toward Jews).

2 ADL Global 100 (2014) and update about 19 countries (2015), Anti-Defamation League, An Index of Anti-Semitism, Executive Summary. <http://global100.adl.org/>

3 Figures for 2015 taken from ADL, Op. cit.; figures for 2014 taken from Koopmans (Germany and France) and Raynié (France). Raynié, Dominique. L’antisémitisme dans l’opinion publique française. Nouveaux éclairages, Fondapol, November 2014. <http://www.fondapol.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CONF2press-Antisemitisme-DOC-6-web11h51.pdf>, Koopmans, Ruud. “Fundamentalism and out-group hostility Muslim immigrants and Christian natives in Western Europe.” WZB Berlin Social Science Center, WZB Mitteilungen, December 2013. [http://www.wzb.eu/sites/default/files/u6/koopmans\\_english\\_ed.pdf](http://www.wzb.eu/sites/default/files/u6/koopmans_english_ed.pdf). See also “Türkische Migranten hoffen auf muslimische Mehrheit,” Die Welt, August 2012, <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article108659406/Tuerkische-Migranten-hoffen-auf-muslimische-Mehrheit.html>

4 France: <http://www.antisemitisme.fr/dl/2015-EN.pdf>; UK : <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2016/02/04/cst-antisemitic-incidents-report-2015-published-today>; Germany : <http://kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/sites/default/files/Report2015-080516.pdf>; harassments in internet and literature not included.

5 FRA: “Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism”, Fundamental Rights Agency, November 2013, European Union. <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and>

resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-discrimination-and-hate-crime-against

6 FRA, op. cit.

7 CNN, "State Department warns Americans about European travel," June 1, 2016.

8 IFOP : "83% of French Jews trust the French government and French security forces." [http://www.ifop.fr/media/pressdocument/883-1-document\\_file.pdf](http://www.ifop.fr/media/pressdocument/883-1-document_file.pdf)

9 IPSOS: <http://www.fondationjudaisme.org/wp-content/uploads/PRESENTATION-GLOBALE-ENQUETE.pdf>





# India and Israel<sup>1</sup>

## Two Years since Narendra Modi's election victory

More than two years have passed since the May 2014 Indian elections when Narendra Modi, leader of the center-right Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was swept into power. His “landmark” victory made him independent of the smaller, left-wing and Muslim parties. In talks with the Israeli Prime Minister he indicated his intention to change India's Israel policy from political coolness and diplomatic distance to open friendship and collaboration.

In India, major foreign and domestic policy changes are generally slow and cumbersome, but with respect to Israel Modi acted quickly. Military relations were boosted by the removal of obstacles to pending deals, and new deals were initiated. In February 2015, Israel's defense minister made an official visit to India, the first of its kind. Modi has

also encouraged trade and cooperation in many civilian sectors. Perhaps most surprising, he made sure that the Lokh Sabha, the lower house of the Indian parliament, did not denounce Israel for its conduct in Gaza during Operation Protective Edge in summer 2014. Further, the Indian delegation to the United Nations was instructed to abstain from one (but not all) of the numerous anti-Israeli resolutions submitted there. India has since supported a few anti-Israeli resolutions regarding settlement activity. Ultimately, the positions India endorses at the UN do not necessarily reflect a true picture of its friendship with Israel. Many of India's recent policy shifts can be seen as having accelerated relations that had already been growing long before Modi. Military relations, civilian trade, and tourism had been increasing at least since 2000, even when the Congress Party ruled India, although it preferred to keep these relations as discreet as possible.

Two highly publicized political visits revealed the depth to which India's public attitude toward Israel has changed under Modi. India's President Pranab Mukherjee paid a state visit to Israel in October 2015, the first of its kind since 1948. In his speech before the Knesset he extended India's hand of friendship to Israel, condemned anti-Israel terrorism, and alluded to the thousand-year-old links between the Indian and Jewish peoples. Shortly after, in January 2016, India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj came to Israel and said that India's ties with the Jewish state were of the "highest importance." In a meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah the day before arriving in Israel, however, Mukherjee, assured the Arab world that it would continue to support Palestinian aspirations. But he also said that India's "bilateral relations with Israel are independent of our relations with Palestine."<sup>2</sup>

## One Man's Whim – or Long-Term Forces of History?

Some skeptics question whether India's policy shift vis-à-vis Israel will endure in the long term. They point to the rapid growth of India's Muslim minority, and to India's enormous economic links with the Muslim Middle East. They also note Indian reports of disappointment with Modi's government because his promised reforms have not all materialized as fast as expected. Could Modi's shift towards Israel turn out to be a temporary, short-lived interruption of India's pursuit of its broader national interests?

The question whether history is determined by the decisions of great leaders or by deeper, long-

term socio-economic forces has preoccupied historians since Karl Marx. A couple of often-quoted phrases Marx wrote in 1851/52 have had a deep and lasting impact on historiography:

"Men make their own history, but they don't make it freely, not under conditions that they choose themselves, but under conditions which they found, which were given and transmitted. The tradition of all the dead generations burdens the brain of the living like a nightmare..."<sup>3</sup>

The issue raised by Marx is particularly relevant to Jewish history. The actions of national and foreign leaders have determined Jewish history no less and arguably more than socio-economic forces or traditions of "dead generations." When President Truman recognized the State of Israel a few minutes after its creation in 1948, a recognition that was critical for Israel's survival, he was driven by deep personal convictions. He swam against the stream. He ignored the arguments of his cabinet members who were convinced that the "given conditions" as Marx wrote, that is, the Near Eastern balance of power would condemn this little, isolated Jewish state to rapid extinction.

How about Modi? Has he transformed India's Israel policy out of personal volition alone, or does he represent deeper, lasting changes in Indian society and an acute assessment of India's long-term trajectory and interests? The answer is: both. It is true that Modi sympathized with Israel before taking office, but it took a major generational and social change to explain his victory. India's young, its professionals and its growing middle class, mostly Hindus, voted

for him. They ignored the admonitions of the ruling Congress Party and some of the elites that voting for Modi would be anti-Muslim. Under Congress Party rule, it was assumed the leader of India could not be a friend of Israel for fear of offending India's Muslims. Modi's victory dented this old taboo and eroded the political deterrence power of India's Muslims in regard to Israel. Modi's new Israel policy is part of a broader reorientation and reassessment of India's foreign and domestic policies. In this sense, 2014 was comparable to 1992 when India established diplomatic relations with Israel. Then, many saw this only as India's reaction to the demise of the anti-Israeli Soviet Union and the rise of the pro-Israeli United States, but it was also part of a much broader intellectual and political upheaval -- "A Million Mutinies Now" as the Indian Nobel laureate and novelist Naipaul called this period.<sup>4</sup> This too, suggests that India's Israel policies will not be reversed quickly.

## Why is India important? The Numbers

In 2015, India's population stood at 1.28 billion, with a very young median age (27 years). China's was 1.4 billion (median age 36 years). In 20 years, India's projected population will exceed that of China (1.5 billion against 1.45 billion). India's GDP in 2014 was \$1.9 trillion and is projected to grow faster than that of any Western country. In 2012, the Paris-based OECD projected the GDP of the main countries as proportion of global GDP by 2060.<sup>5</sup> India is expected to move from

7 percent in 2011 to 18 percent in 2060, China from 17 to 28 percent, the United States will decrease slightly from 23 to 17 percent, and Europe will plummet from 17 to 9 percent. There is a speculative element in OECD forecasts, but for India they can be based among other things, on the country's increasingly better-educated and ambitious youth.

## India's Soft Power Assets

Numbers are not everything. India has many assets that cannot be measured by statistics. It has considerable soft power across the world. Its people, colors, food, culture, music, dress, religions and the memory of Mahatma Gandhi remain popular in the West. As the demonization of Israel in various countries continues, India's friendship might be helpful. Already, Modi's first public steps to improve relations with Israel have been widely noted in the international media. But it is not only the West that matters. India may also become a gateway to other Asian nations with strong links to India and with large Indian minorities.

The Indian diasporas, particularly in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and South Africa, are an important asset for India. Their voice is heard in Delhi. They could be influenced by Jewish diaspora outreach in their respective host countries and by India's Israel policies.

## India's Quest for Great Power Status

India's numbers and its soft power do not automatically translate into great

power status if there is no will to use these assets in the international arena. Is there an Indian quest for great power status, comparable to that of China? The signs are mixed. In the last decades, India has occasionally engaged in power politics with some of its neighbors, but has been averse to throwing its weight around on the global scene or in the

**Modi's victory eroded the political deterrence power of India's Muslims in regard to Israel**

Middle East. A quest for great power status can be found in some of India's elites, its middle class and its government bureaucracy. India's unsuccessful demand for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council was an expression of this quest. India has

many assets: its size, its fast growing population and economy, its military and naval clout in South Asia and the Indian Ocean and its soft power. But India has also major shortcomings: its economic and social bottlenecks; its poverty and illiteracy; its corruption and stifling bureaucracy.

Another obstacle to great power status has been India's difficulty to project an assertive message to the world and to convince the international community that it has the capacity and will to help protect peace and shape global policies. But Modi has already given indications that he plans

to change this. His numerous high-visibility visits to countries near and far set him apart of all his predecessors. Modi has energy and vision, and the current times are propitious for India. The power of the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and France has been declining over time at least in relative terms. In 2015, many commentators also saw a weakening of the power of China for economic reasons, and of Germany for political reasons. Others deemed Russia's current geopolitical resurgence unsustainable in the long term. Unless the United States reasserts itself, India presently seems the only exception among the big players.

## Fast Growing Links with the Middle East

India is entering the Middle East in giant, though still discreet, steps. There is abundant media attention to the shift of power from West to East, particularly to the rise of China, and less so, of India. But little has been written on the impact of this shift on the Middle East. There is growing interdependence between the Middle East and Asia, and there will be long-term global consequences if the big Asian countries become major power holders in the Middle East. India's size, soft power, and its possible quest for a big-power role will have various effects on the Middle East. For India, more than for China, being drawn into the Middle East renews a very old history. Intense trading and cultural relations existed between India and the civilizations of Mesopotamia 4000 years ago. Relations were strengthened by the spread of Islam, which covered the Middle East and

parts of India. Only Great Britain's imperial expansion put a temporary end to many of these links.

## Energy and Economic Links with the Middle East

Today, the strongest and also newest driver of close links between India and the Middle East is India's need for Middle Eastern oil energy resources. And at the same time, the oil and gas producers need safe markets, investments, and protection now that the United States no longer needs their oil and gas – their dependence on Asia is no less critical than Asia's dependence on their energy. India's demand for oil imports is growing fast. In the last years, two thirds of its imported oil came from the Middle East, a proportion predicted to grow to over 90 percent by 2030. As a direct outcome of the energy interdependency, trade between India, the Middle East and North Africa has increased 25 times since 2001 and currently exceeds \$170 billion, only three percent of which is trade with Israel. Middle Eastern trade represents a quarter of India's total trade, twice as much as India's trade with the United States or China. Trade is accompanied by huge investment flows in both directions, joint ventures and remittances of \$30 billion or more flowing back to India from estimated seven million Indian workers in the Gulf.

For historical, geopolitical, and domestic (large Shiite minority) reasons, India wants good relations with Iran, but most of its Middle Eastern oil is imported from the Arab Gulf. Any serious clash between Iran and the Arab world would generate dilemmas India does not wish to face.

## Islam: India's Historical and Cultural Bonds with the Muslim Middle East

Oil is the primary driver of India's relations with the Middle East, but Islam is the second and far older driver. Islam penetrated India across the centuries, by military conquest and peaceful commerce. Many Hindus see this history as one of foreign occupation, yet Islam has become an integral part of India's identity and culture. The common Indian and Arab struggle against British colonialism added a strong political bond. As a result, concern for Islamic issues, including Palestinian opposition to Zionism, moved into the center of India's domestic and foreign politics, and remained there long after the end of British rule.

Currently, there are approximately 180 million Indian Muslims, an estimated 20 million are Shiites. India holds the world's second largest Muslim population. After partition in 1947, seven percent of its citizens were Muslims. Today, they are said to represent 15 percent, but precise figures are not available. The great majority of India's Muslims is moderate and wants to remain Indian. However, there is also a Muslim awakening and a radicalization of a minority, which is fueled by foreign Muslim money and propaganda, as well as by some of

**India's unsuccessful demand for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council was an expression of its great power ambitions**

the Muslim Indian workers returning from the Gulf. Against these negative trends stands a resurgent Hindu nationalism and the steady rise of a Western-oriented professional middle class, which was integral in bringing Modi to power. How these different trends will evolve and interact with each other is difficult to predict. However, India is likely to retain several lessons from its long experience with domestic and foreign Muslim politics: Most Indian Muslims barely reacted, both when India established diplomatic relations with Israel (1992) or when it became more openly friendly to Israel (2014); and second, relations with Israel have not damaged India's relations with either the Arab world or Iran. On the contrary, the Israel relationship forced them to realize that India might not automatically support whatever they said or did against Israel, as it had in the past. In addition, India's hope that strong support for Arab causes would inhibit Arab support for Pakistan turned out to be an illusion. The Arabs have always supported Pakistan against India, irrespective of India's Israel policy.

## Steady Growth of Indo-Israeli Relations

In 1947, India supported the Arab countries in the United Nations and voted against the establishment of a Jewish state. In 1949, India again voted with the Arabs against the admission of Israel to the United Nations. In 1992, it established diplomatic relations with Israel. 2014 heralded a fundamental revision of its Israel policy, in favor of open friendship and cooperation with the Jewish state. From 1992

on, political and diplomatic ties moved ahead, slowly and sporadically, although India continued to vote for every UN anti-Israel resolution, and Indian leaders largely avoided meetings with Israeli leaders. There were a few exceptions: President Ezer Weizmann's state visit to Delhi in 1996, and more importantly, Prime Minister Sharon's visit in 2003, but no Indian leader ever visited Israel until President Mukherjee's state visit to Jerusalem in 2015. He invited both Israel's President and Prime Minister to India and confirmed that Prime Minister Modi planned a visit to Israel.

Military cooperation, joint research and development, arms sales, cyber-security and counterterrorism are the sectors in which Indo-Israeli ties are older and deeper than in any other sector. Both countries live in dangerous neighborhoods, which has led to a tacit convergence of strategic interests. These ties had already begun in the 1960s and have never been interrupted, even during the decades when India's official policy toward Israel was hostile. Today, India is Israel's largest weapons market (an estimated \$1 billion annually has been cited). In the coming years, Israel may have to cope with growing foreign, particularly American, competition and India's own growing armaments industry. The Indo-Israeli relationship must not depend so strongly on the military sector alone. Furthermore, one cannot speak of a full Indo-Israeli "strategic alliance" as India has naval, military, and many other links with some of Israel's enemies, particularly Iran.

Indo-Israeli economic links have enormous potential. Bilateral civilian trade moved from \$200 million in 1992 to approximately \$4.5 billion in

2015. The increase is huge when seen in isolation, but less so when compared to other countries. Bilateral trade with Turkey for example, which has a population 20 times smaller than India and a GDP four times smaller, has reached more than \$5 billion. India is one of Israel's fastest growing export markets. Experts have conjectured that bilateral trade could reach \$10-15 billion if a free trade agreement (FTA) were signed. FTA negotiations began in 2006, and bore no fruit. Negotiations resumed in 2016. A FTA with India would benefit Israel's consumers, but harm its protected manufacturing sector, which may be one of the reasons for the delays and obstacles.<sup>6</sup>

## **A Dearth of Information and Cultural Links**

The weakest link in the Indo-Israeli relationship, which does not bode well for the future, is that most of the Indian people know little or nothing of Jews, Judaism, Israel, or the Holocaust. Some, among them left-wing intellectuals and Muslims, see Israel only through the lens of the Palestinian conflict. Others, including right-wing Hindus, admire Israel as a mythical warrior nation fighting Muslims. There is a great need to improve the Jewish people and Israel's soft power in India through cultural outreach, education, and the media, but the resources to do so are woefully inadequate. Israel has a modest cultural policy in India, mainly involving the performing arts and sports. Academic links between the two countries are still quite small. Israel's universities both teach and research on old and new India, but no more

than two or three scholars or lecturers deal with Israel or Judaism in Indian universities. These efforts, on both sides, are severely under-funded and under-staffed.

## **The India-Israel-Jewish People Triangle**

Jews and Judaism have had more links with old and new India, and played a more important role in the Indo-Israeli relationship than is generally known.

### *Contacts Between Two Old Civilizations*

Words of Indian origin appear in the Hebrew Bible, e.g. for the spices imported from India for the daily Temple service in Jerusalem. The Jews of Hellenistic and Talmudic times knew India and its goods. Medieval philosophers, e.g. Maimonides and Yehuda Ha-Levi, discuss India. In modern times, Jewish refugees, adventurers, and seekers of Eastern spirituality have flocked to India. However, they have had little impact and built no lasting bridges between India and the Jewish people.

### *The Jews of India*

In contrast, the Jews of India did build bridges. Jews lived peacefully in India for centuries. They preserved their Judaism not as a reaction against external hostility as in other cases – there was never any indigenous anti-Judaism in India – but because they cherished their Jewish traditions and developed creative cultural interactions with their Hindu and Muslim environments. Hindu India did not try to convert non-Hindus, was not jealous of Jewish success, and had no negative religious

memories of Jews. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jews made remarkable contributions to all facets of Indian life despite their small numbers – to public health, education, the film industry, the armed forces, and more. The Indian caste system, which prohibited intermarriage between castes and religions, helped the Jews to preserve their identity. When the caste system weakened after India’s independence, this protection risked collapse. This is one of the reasons why the great majority of Indian Jews emigrated to Israel after 1948. In Israel, Indian Jews have not become politically prominent, but

**India is Israel’s largest weapons market – \$1 billion annually**

perhaps a new role awaits them now. This is what the Indian embassy in Israel thought when it called on Indian Jews in 2015 to help strengthen Indo-Israeli links.

*Failed World Jewish Interventions for Zionism and Israel 1920-1970/80*

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, world Jewish outreach to India focused on Zionism and Israel. India’s Jews received educational, professional, and economic help from Jewish organizations, but they were not discriminated against and their condition did not call for any foreign crisis intervention. There were Western Jews who sympathized with India’s struggle for independence and admired Gandhi. One of them was the South African Herman Kallenbach who became one of Gandhi’s closest friends (Gandhi lived 1893-1914 in South Africa). However, in the early 1920s, even before the first Zionist approaches, the Palestinian nationalist leader Hadj Amin El-Husseini understood the

importance of India and sent emissaries to agitate there against Zionism and the – fabricated – “Jewish threat” against the El Aqsa mosque. Some years later, Zionist emissaries together with Kallenbach tried to convince Gandhi that Zionism was a just cause but failed. Gandhi’s opposition is often misunderstood and is still quoted by Israel’s enemies. Gandhi was attuned to Muslim sensitivities, particularly on Palestine, because his overriding aim was to prevent the partition of India and the creation of a Muslim state. He, Nehru, and the Congress Party feared that the proposal of a Jewish state requiring the partition of Palestine would become a precedent for the partition of India – which is indeed what happened in 1947. Albert Einstein, too, tried to convince Nehru in 1947 to agree to the creation of a Jewish state, but he also failed. Gandhi had great sympathy for the Jewish people and knew of their suffering but simply did not grasp the enormity of the Nazi threat. It is clear from his exchanges with Kallenbach that in private he did not oppose Zionism as he did publicly.<sup>7</sup> There is some evidence that Gandhi slowly began to change his opinion about a Jewish state before he was assassinated in January 1948. In any event, early Zionist lobbying of Indian leaders was bound to fail. There was no chance that these leaders would yield to foreign pleas and run the risk of infuriating their country’s Muslims. Even after partition, the “Muslim constraint” did not allow open links with Israel. But India agreed to contacts with international Jewish organizations. This was an opening that the Jewish people could not, and did not miss.

### *Successful World Jewish Interventions*

Almost from the day Israel was created and found the doors to India closed, international (mainly American) Jewish organizations opened a dialogue with the governments of India and lobbied them to recognize Israel and establish diplomatic relations. The heads of the World Zionist Organization and the World Jewish Congress participated in these efforts, and so did prominent American Jewish congressmen who were regarded as friends of India and whose advice India could not easily ignore. In the end, whenever Indian leaders visited the United States, it became a habit for them to meet with American Jewish leaders. Jewish lobbying often focused on seemingly minor problems, such as restrictions imposed on an Israeli consulate or the visa difficulties of an Israeli tennis team. Playing in India. However, the ultimate purpose was always the same: to wear down India's rejection of Israel by bringing the American super-power into India's political calculations. In the 1980s, pressure could be quite blunt, for example when Jewish leaders warned India that it could lose friends in the United States if it did not modify its Israel policy. Several factors motivated India to finally establish relations with Israel. Retrospectively measuring the relative weight of American Jewish pressure in comparison to other drivers of Indian policy is difficult. But it is sure that this long-lasting pressure had an impact on Indian thought and policy.

American Jews did not limit their initiatives to Indo-Israeli diplomacy. Jewish organizations reached out to the increasingly successful Indian diaspora in the United States. Jewish leaders called

it "an investment in the future": If Indians and Jews worked together and supported common interests, there would be positive repercussions on India's Israel policies. No less portentous was the decision of American Jewish organizations to set up "interfaith" programs with American Hindus – there are more than a billion Hindus in the world. Three Hindu-Jewish summit meetings resulted from this initiative in Delhi (2007), Jerusalem (2008) and Washington (2009). These and other American Jewish initiatives demonstrated creativity and enthusiasm. They are reinforcing the triangular relationship between India, Israel and the Jewish people. The rise to power of an Indian leader who is friendly to Israel does not mean that World Judaism has no longer a role to play in the "triangle." On the contrary, old problems have not all disappeared and new challenges and opportunities are waiting.

**Hindu Indians  
were never  
jealous of Jewish  
success and  
had no negative  
religious  
memories of  
Jews**

## Endnotes

- 1 This chapter is partly based on the JPPI 2016 Book by Shalom Salomon Wald and Arielle Kandel, *India, Israel and the Jewish People*.
- 2 Indian President Expresses Support for Independent Palestine, *Haaretz*, Oct.12, 2015.
- 3 Karl Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Napoleon*, 1851/1852, 1. Gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/der-achtzehnte-brumaire-des-louis-napoleon-4983/1. Translation from the German by the author.
- 4 V.S. Naipaul, *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, London: Vintage Books, 1991.
- 5 OECD Economic Policy Papers 03: *Looking to 2060: Long-term global growth prospects – A going for growth report*, OECD, November 2012, 22.
- 6 The 2016 *OECD Economic Survey of Israel*, OECD 31.Jan. 2016, provides a critical review if Israel's "political economy".
- 7 See Shimon Lev, *Soulmates – The Story of Mahatma Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach*, New Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2012, 116 ff.



# The Population of Israel

## 1. Introduction

2015 was characterized by minor changes in the size and demographic patterns of world Jewry. Of special significance: an increase in the number of Jewish inhabitants (and those of "no religion") in Israel by approximately 130,000; a rise in the number of new immigrants in Israel (a continuation of the trend observed in the last two years); and the stability of the high level of Jewish fertility in Israel – above three children per woman.

In light of the fact that Israel is home to the largest Jewish community in the world, 6.3 million out of, according to Sergio DellaPergola in the upcoming 2016 American Jewish Year Book, world Jewish population of 14.4 million at the beginning of this year,<sup>1</sup> the dynamic of its demographic patterns, and the ongoing scholarly and public discourse on the balance between Jews and non-Jews, we devote the demographic chapter of this year's Annual Assessment to the Israeli population. The heterogeneous composition of the population

requires detailed analysis of its demographic characteristics, follow-up over time, and evaluation of possible future developments. This should allow us to efficiently use the empirical evidence for policy-making conducive to the continued increase of the Jewish Israeli population and the Jewish character of the country, while also securing the status and equal rights of all its minority groups.

Jerusalem's special status as a capital city, its religious importance to Judaism, Islam and Christianity, and its being one of the more sensitive focal points in the Arab-Israeli conflict, led us to examine Jerusalem's population in detail. Add to this the events of summer-winter of 2015 – the rise in tensions between Jews and Arabs that has resulted in a spate of stabbing, car ramming, and even shooting attacks of individual residents of the city. The recent wave of attacks known as the "Lone-Wolf Intifada," although other parts of the country were not spared, was focused disproportionately on Jerusalem. It has awakened a debate on the status

of Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods, both those within the security barrier and those on its other side. Although a political agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority doesn't seem close at this time, there is no doubt that any eventual deal will include Jerusalem. Religious, security, economic, and also demographic considerations will need to be taken into account.

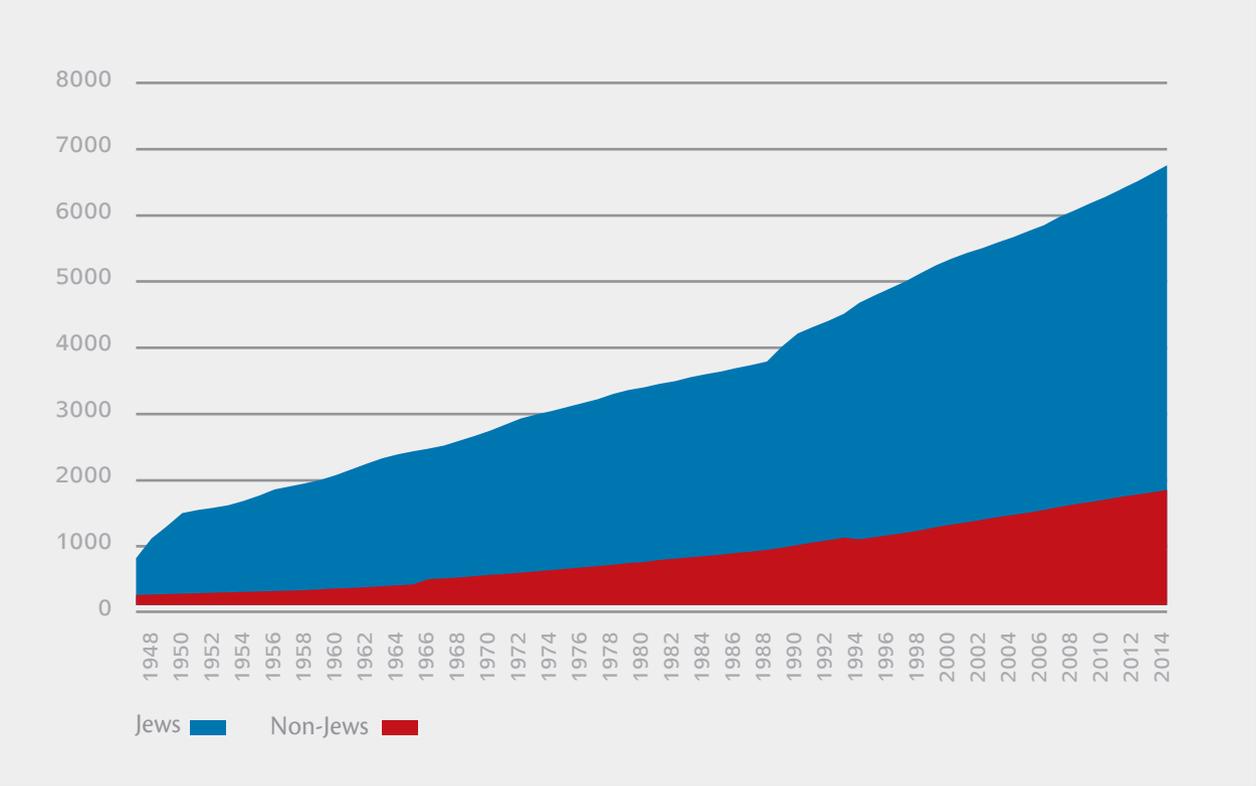
## 2. Size and Composition

When Israel was founded in 1948, its population was enumerated at 872,000 inhabitants (Figure 2.1). At the end of 2015, there were 8,464,100 people living in the country. Thus, in less than seven decades the population increased almost tenfold. This growth did not spread evenly over time: the population crossed the one million line in 1949; the two million line in 1958; three million in 1970; four million in 1982; five million in 1991; six million in 1998; seven million in 2006; and eight million in 2013. Hence, the number of years between population increases of one million has shortened over time.

The Jewish population and the non-Jewish population have each evolved at a different pace. While the number of Jews increased from 716,700 in 1948 to 6,706,400 at the beginning of 2015 – an increase factor of 9.4, the number of non-Jews increased from 156,000 to 1,757,700 in the same period, an increase factor of 11.3. Thus, the proportion of Jews out of the total Israeli population diminished somewhat from 82 to 79 percent (with fluctuations over time mainly caused by the number of new immigrants).

The Jewish population includes people with "no religion" most of whom are immigrants from the FSU who are not Halachically Jewish but have a Jewish background or some Jewish affinity making them eligible to settle in Israel under the Law of Return. Likewise, since 1967 the Jewish population has included Jews living in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights (and in the Gaza Strip in the period 1967-2005); the non-Jewish population, for its part, includes the Muslim, Christian, and Druze inhabitants of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

**Figure 2.1 The Population of Israel, 1948-2015 (in Thousand)**



Adopted from: Central Bureau of Statistics (hereafter: CBS), Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2015; and Monthly Bulletin, February, 2016.

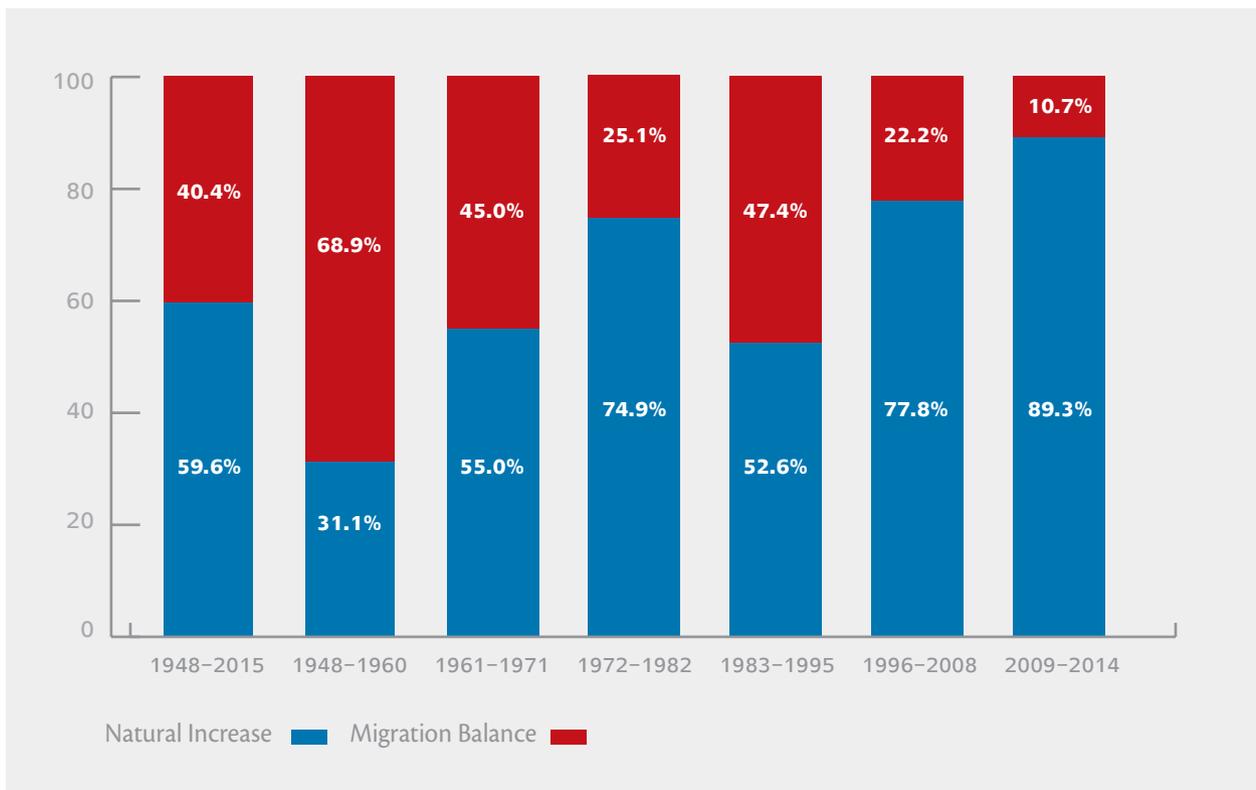
The non-Jewish population is not made of one cloth. Rather, it is comprised of Muslims, Christians, and Druze. Over time, the share of Muslims out of the total non-Jewish population has increased from slightly more than two-thirds in 1950 to 83 percent today; during the same time, the proportion of Christians has declined from about one-fifth to less than ten percent . The proportion of Druze among the non-Jewish population has changed little. These trends have mainly been the result of differences in fertility levels among the three sub-groups.

The sole source of growth of the non-Jewish population is natural movement, namely the differential between births and deaths. In contrast, the number of Jews is determined by two factors: natural movement, and international migration balance, i.e., immigration to Israel minus emigration of Jews from Israel. Over the course of statehood, out of the total Jewish population growth, 60 percent is attached to natural increase and 40 percent to positive migration balance (Figure 2.2).

A detailed look by decennial intervals postulates that the contribution of migration balance was especially salient during the first years of statehood: in the first decennial period (1948-1960) it accounted for two-thirds of the total growth. In the second decennial period (1961-1972) the rate of migration balance diminished to 45 percent of the total population increase, and from the 1972 census to the 1983 census it further

declined to only 25 percent. The large influx of Jews from the FSU, and to a lesser extent from Ethiopia, upended this trend, whereas between 1983 and 1995 the Jewish population increase was divided almost equally between natural movement and migration balance. Since then, we have witnessed a gradual decline in the role of migration, down to only 10.7 percent of the total Jewish population growth over the last five years.

**Figure 2.2 Sources of Jewish Population Growth, 1948-2015 (Percentages)**



Adopted from: CBS, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2015.

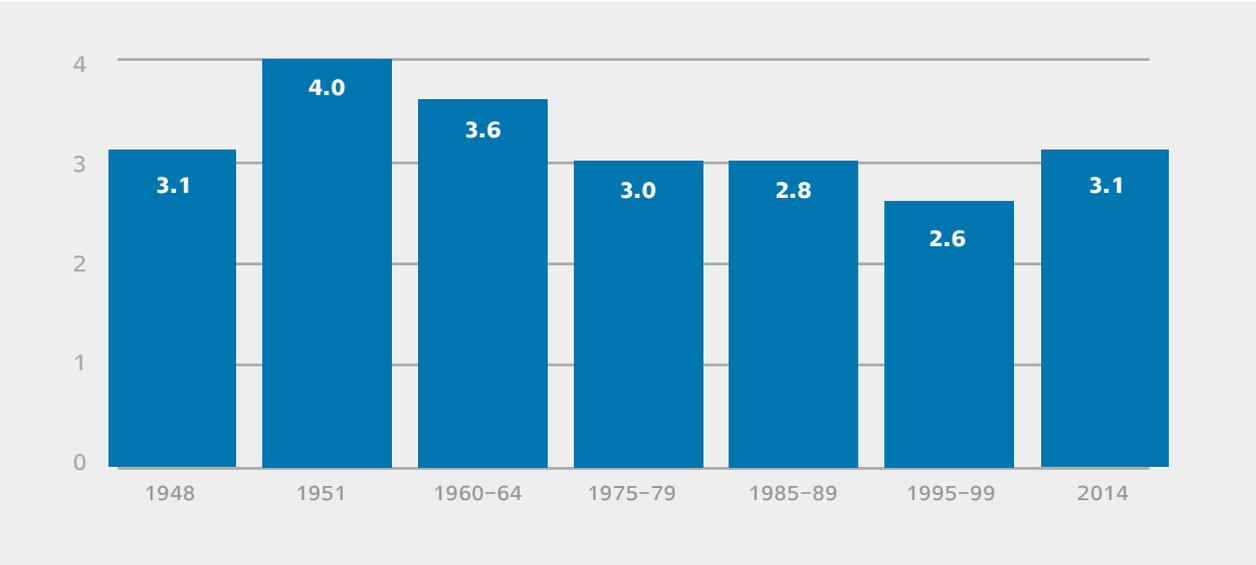
### 3. Fertility, Mortality, and International Migration

#### 3.1 Fertility

The fertility patterns of the Israeli population, measured here by the average number of children woman is expected to have over her life course (Total Fertility Rate), differs between Jews and non-Jews, and within each group by religious and ethnic affiliations. Likewise, fertility patterns are not constant and change over time. The number of children is affected, among other things, by educational attainment, employment status, level of religiosity, and familial characteristics such as age at marriage and stability of family.

When the state was founded each Israeli Jewish woman had, on average, 3.1 children (Figure 3.1). Shortly thereafter, the fertility level increased to 4 children largely due to the addition of a large number of immigrants from Asia and North Africa (Sephardim) who had large families (of 5-6 children). As time progressed, the Sephardic Jews gradually converged to the lower fertility level of their counterpart of European origin (Ashkenazim) who had, on average, 3 children. This tendency was not disrupted, albeit it was slowed by additional waves of immigration from North Africa. Overall, Jewish fertility in Israel diminished to 3 children in the second half of the 1970s, and further to 2.8 children on the eve of the large exodus from the Soviet Union.

Figure 3.1. Total Fertility Rate among Jewish Women in Israel, 1948-2014 (Selected Years)



Adopted from: CBS, Statistical Abstract of Israel, Selected Years.

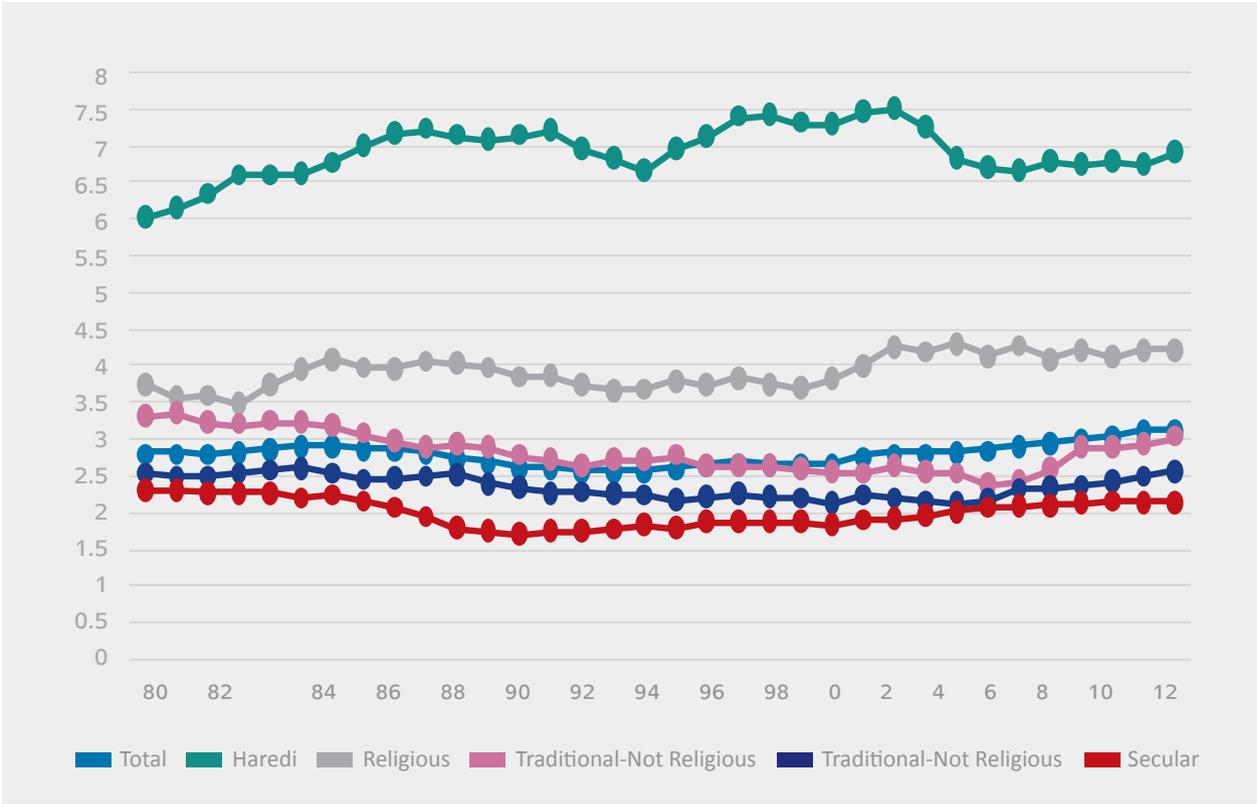
The large number of FSU immigrants, on the one hand, and their low level of fertility on the other, affected the average Jewish fertility, which reached an all time low point of 2.6 children in the last decade of the 20th century. The recently observed slight increase in fertility among Israeli women of Soviet background, along with the increased share of the religious and Haredi sub-groups, explain the addition of half a child to the total fertility rate of Israeli Jews, which stood at 3.1 at the beginning of 2015. Thus, over time, there have been fluctuations in the average number of children per Jewish woman as a result of large waves of immigration and different fertility patterns according to areas of origin; processes of convergence to similar patterns after settling in Israel and especially among their offspring; and compositional changes of the Israeli Jewish population resulting from an increase in the proportion of people with a strong religious orientation. After all these ups and downs, the fertility level of Israeli Jews today is similar to the level when the state was founded.

As suggested, the Jewish fertility level has recently been on the rise. No less important is the fact that it stands above replacement level (2.1 children per woman). This means that Jewish natural movement is positive in Israel, and that young age groups are larger than older age groups, hence population growth. This differentiates the Israeli Jewish population from other Western societies

in Europe and North America where fertility levels are at the replacement threshold or below it. Likewise, the fertility level of all Jewish sub-groups in Israel is higher than the average fertility level in Diaspora communities.

Level of fertility varies by religiosity (Figure 3.2). In 2012-14 the average number of children for Haredi woman was 6.9, 4.2 for religious woman, 3 for traditional-religious, 2.6 for traditional-not very religious, and 2.1 (replacement level) among secular women. Trends over time suggest some diminishing in Haredi fertility, and a concurrent increase among the other sub-groups (the religious, traditional-religious, traditional-not very religious, and secular). Notably, there have been periods in the past when the fertility of Haredi women had declined but later reversed itself and increased once again. In the past 35 years, Haredi fertility has ranged between a low of 6 children to a high of 7.5 children. The increase in the number of children among secular women reflects a return to the level that characterized this group on the eve of the large influx of immigrants from the FSU in the 1990s. Still, Haredi fertility is three times higher than that of secular women, and fertility among the religious is twice as high as among the secular. Hence, sub-groups within the Israeli Jewish sector have increased at a different pace, which has strengthened the weight of Haredi and religious Jews.

Figure 3.2. Fertility Rates among Jewish Women in Israel, by Religiosity, 1980-2013

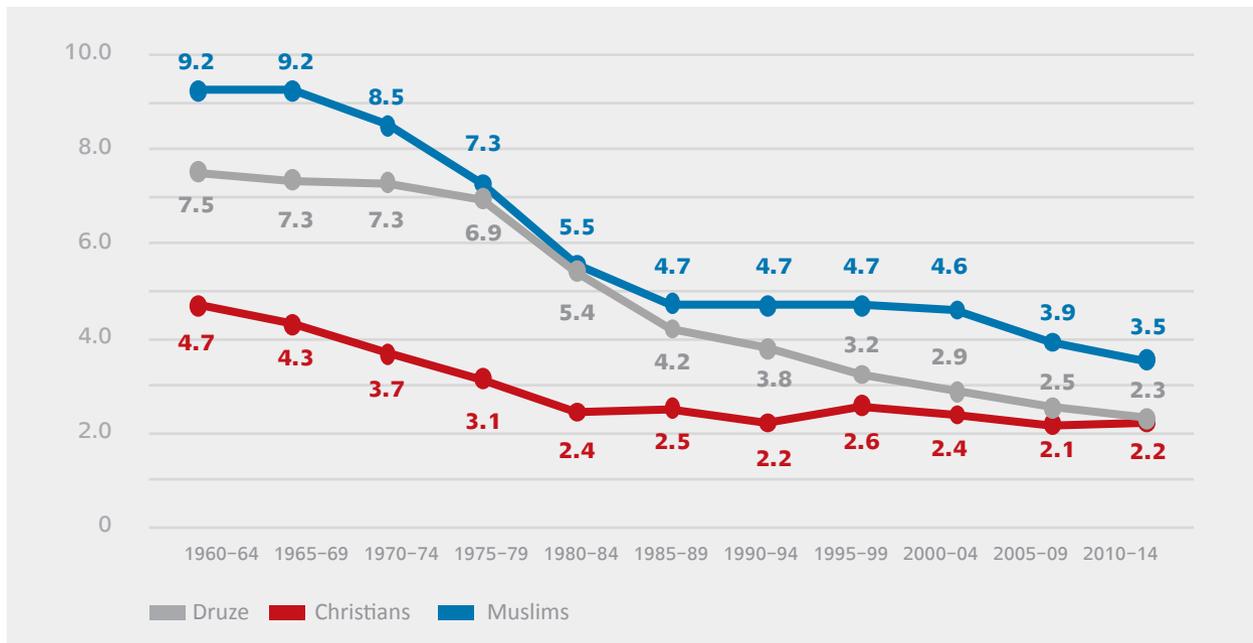


Adopted from: Ahmad Halil, Fertility among Jewish Women in Israel, by Level of Religiosity, 1979-2014. Jerusalem, CBS, Series of Technical Papers.

As Jewish fertility has risen, the fertility of other Israeli groups has diminished (Figure 3.3). This process is especially salient among Muslims: in the early 1960s Muslim women, on average, gave birth to 9 children, by mid-1980s this rate had declined to 5 children, and to less than 3.5 in 2015. Among Druze, fertility has declined from 7.5 children in the first half of the 1960s to 2.2 children today; and among Christians the change was from 4.7 to

2.3 children in the same period. The contradictory trends among Jews and Muslims has totally masked the substantial differentials between the two groups of the past. Yet, because of the past high Muslim fertility, this population has a very young age composition and hence grows faster than the Jewish population. Jewish fertility is higher (by about one child) than that of the Druze or Christians.

Figure 3.3. Total Fertility Rates of Muslims, Christians, and Druze Women in Israel, 1960-2014



Adopted from: CBS, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2015.

### 3.2 Mortality

While fertility contributes to population increase, mortality exits people out. The balance between births and deaths determines natural movement. The death rates are affected by life expectancy, that is the average number of years a person is expected to live, as well as by the age composition of the population: the older the population the higher its mortality rates. Life expectancy reflects the level of medical services, the quality of the environment, and lifestyles that expose people to illness and risk of death.

Life expectancy differs for men and women. Women live longer than men. Gender differences are partly explained by genetics, and partly by different social, work, and health behaviors. Likewise, in any given country there may be life

expectancy differences along racial, ethnic, or religious lines as well as those related to socio-economic stratification and cultural behaviors.

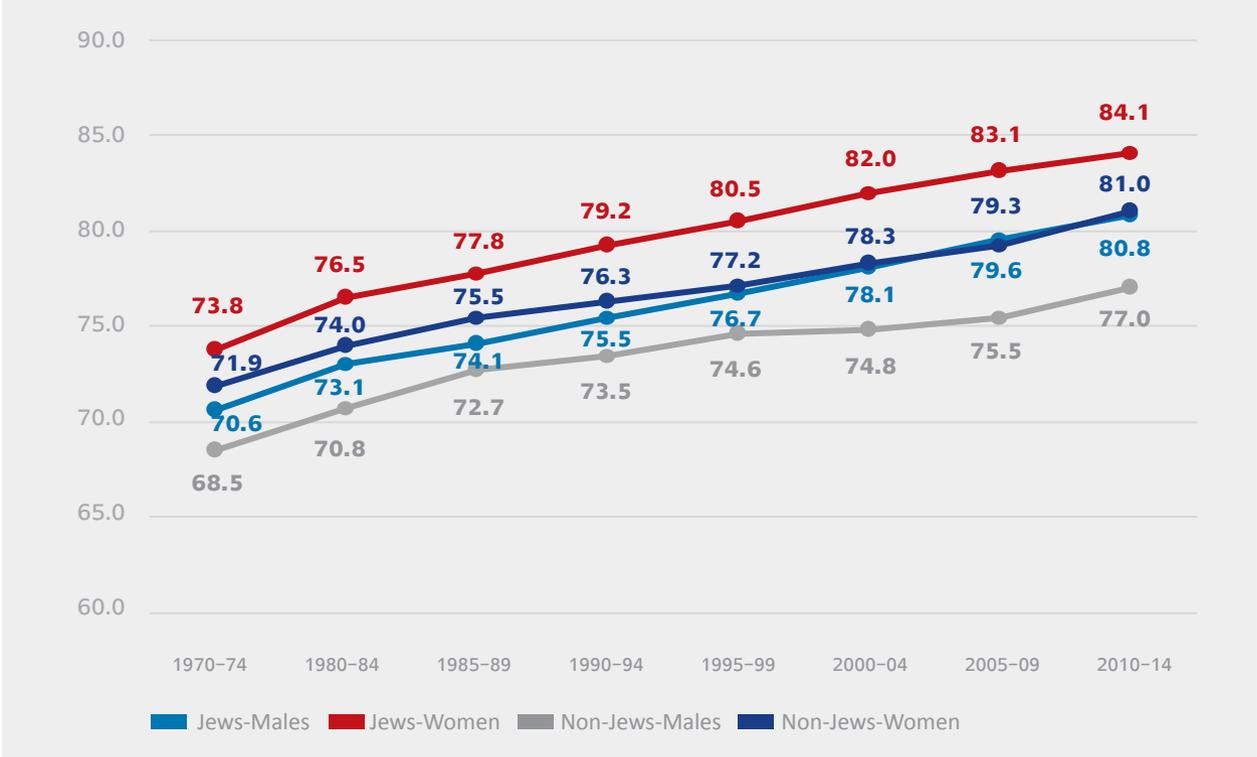
Israel is defined as a developed country and is notable for the longevity of its citizens. Life expectancy is steadily on the rise (Figure 3.4). Since 1970, the life expectancy of Jewish men and women has increased by approximately ten years: from 70.6 to 80.8 years for men, and from 73.8 to 84.1 years for women. Notably, the gender gap has remained fairly unchanged, and is among the lowest in the West.

Life expectancy among non-Jews has also increased: among men - from 68.5 years in the early 1970s to 77 years today, and among women - from 71.9 to 81.0 years in the same period. The pace of increase in life expectancy was faster among Jews

than among non-Jews. Hence, the gaps between the two groups have widened since 1970: among men - from a 2.1 year gap in favor of Jews to 3.8 today; and among women, from 1.9 in 1970 to 3.1 years today. This gap widening between Jews and non-Jews happened despite the fact that in the

1990s a large number of FSU immigrants arrived in Israel with significantly lower life expectancies than the veteran Jewish population. The life expectancy of non-Jewish men and women today is similar to that of their Jewish counterparts some 15 years ago.

**Figure 3.4. Life Expectancy of Israeli Population, by Religion and Gender, 1970-2014**



Adopted from: CBS, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2015.

**3.3. International Migration**

Since its founding, Israel has absorbed some three million people. Immigration to Israel has not been evenly distributed across the years, rather it has been characterized by a repeating wave-like pattern of periods of high immigrant numbers followed by periods with lower immigrant

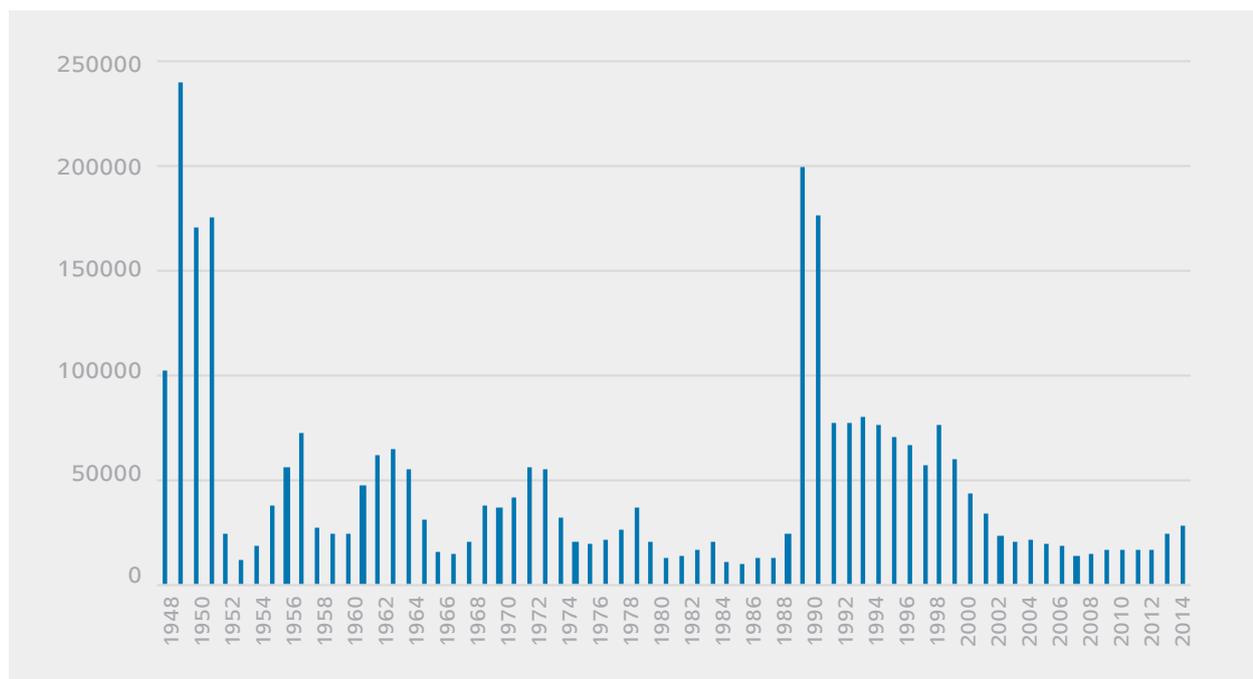
numbers (Figure 3.5). Within these ups and downs, there have been two salient waves: between mid-1948 and the end of 1951 ("mass immigration"), which brought to Israel 687,000 men and women; and the second wave between 1990 and 1994, in which slightly more than 600,000 immigrants settled in Israel. Because of the substantial increase in the size of the Jewish population over the first

40 years of statehood, the relative contribution of each of the waves, despite their similar absolute numbers, is very different: while the first wave doubled the size of the Israeli Jewish population, the second wave increased the Jewish population by 20 percent.

Following the mass immigration immediately after statehood, there were two additional waves, though much smaller, in the mid-1950s and in the first half of the 1960s that mainly brought Jews who had remained in east and central Europe and in North African countries. A relatively large number of immigrants arrived once again between 1968 and 1973; in the main, they were Jews from North America and west Europe motivated by Zionist passion in light of

Israel's victory and the reunification of Jerusalem in the Six-Day War. Some immigrants also arrived at that time from central European Communist satellite states. Later in the 1970s, the Soviet Union allowed a limited number of Jews to emigrate, some of whom settled in Israel. In 1983 and 1991, Israel absorbed two large waves of immigrants from Ethiopia, which brought most of the Jewish community there. After the termination of the large FSU influx in the 1990s, the annual number of immigrants stabilized at the range of 15-25,000 people which includes Jews as well as non-Jewish kin that meet the criteria of the Law of Return. In last two years, the number of immigrants has increased chiefly due to the enhanced flow from France and Ukraine.

**Figure 3.5. Immigration to Israel, 1948-2015**



Adopted from CBS, Statistical Abstract, 2015.

Concurrent with immigration, others, known as *yordim* (descenders), have chosen to leave the country. We do not know the exact number of Israelis who have left permanently. The available data relate to people who left Israel and didn't return after one year abroad. This information can't provide a real picture of the phenomenon of emigration from Israel and might be even misleading. On one hand, Israelis who settled abroad permanently but visit Israel frequently and are therefore no longer counted as emigrants; on the other hand, the data include people who traveled abroad for a relatively long period, for example to study, without visiting Israel but nevertheless intend to return. Notably, some of the emigrants are, in fact, return migrants i.e., Jews who immigrated to Israel and later decided either to return to their home country or move to a third country. Typically, the number of emigrants increases after each wave of new comers.

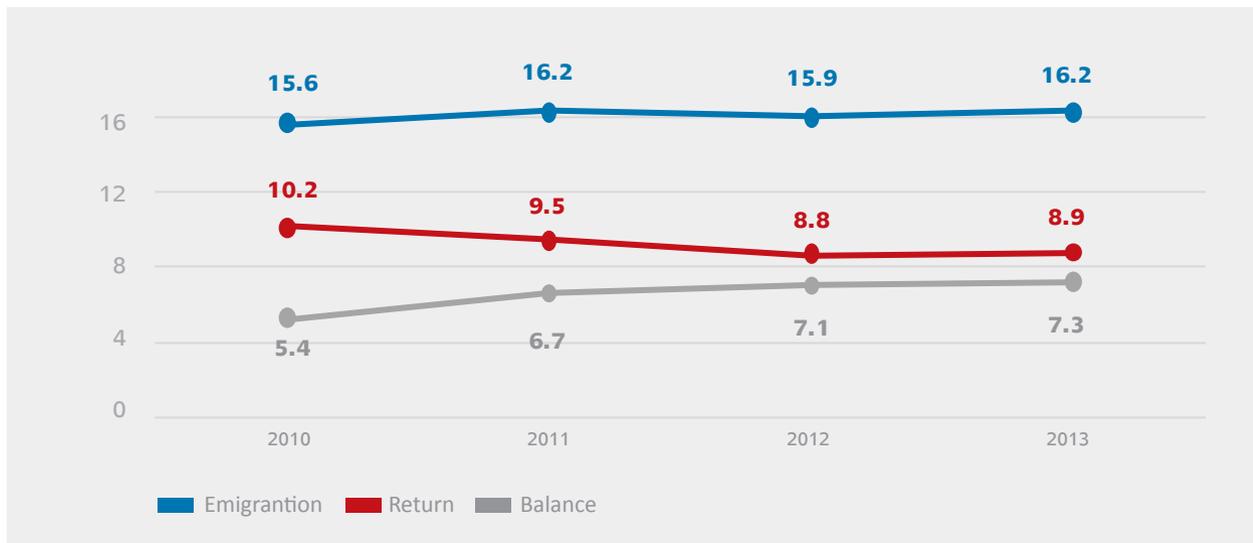
From 1948 to today 674,500 Jewish inhabitants left the country. If we divide this period into intervals of 10 to 12 years each, we see: a large emigration out of the country in the first dozen years of statehood (some 100,000 people); between 1971 and 1982 (133,000 emigrants); and a peak of emigrants between 1983 and 1995 of slightly more than 200,000. It stands to reason that large numbers of emigrants are associated

with unsuccessful absorption of recently arrived immigrants. Also, in the last half of the 1990s through 2008, a substantial number of people (129,000) chose to leave the country, including some who had arrived from the FSU a few years earlier.

In each of the years from 2010 to 2013, approximately 16,000 people emigrated from Israel (Figure 3.6). At the same time, in each of these years, an estimated 10,000 Israelis returned back home. Hence, the negative balance between emigre and returning Israelis (who lived abroad for a continuous period of one year or more) ranges between 5,000 and 7,000 every year. During this period, there was a gradual increase in the negative balance of Israeli migration: a net loss of 5,400 in 2010, 6,700 in 2011, 7,100 in 2012, and 7,300 in 2013 (or an increase of one third between 2010 and 2013). This is a rate of growth in net migration much higher than the rate of increase of the size of the Israeli population.

It is worth noting that 41 percent of the emigrants were between the ages of 20 and 39, and another 32 percent were children. Thus, approximately three-fourths of the emigrants were singles or young families, disrupting the most (re)productive age cohorts and those expected to carry the civic burden of military service (both mandatory and reserve duty).

**Figure 3.6. Emigration, Return Migration, and Migration Balance of Israelis Who Stayed Abroad for a Continuous Period of One Year or More, 2010-2013**



Adopted from CBS, Statistical Abstract, 2015.

## 4. Geographic Dispersal and Mobility

The Israeli government has always regarded population as a tool for spatial planning and settlement. In a country where agricultural workers constitute only a tiny proportion of the labor force, and where the location of industry is often not guided by the location of natural resources, social, economic, and geopolitical considerations, along with environmental concerns, determined the geographic distribution of the population. The state provides meaningful economic incentives in housing, labor, and tax relief to attract people to high priority areas of settlement. These factors, together with individual and familial characteristics, such as educational attainment, economic status, and ideological orientation, shape the patterns of residential

mobility and population distribution.

Israel is a small country. Its size is 21,000 square kilometers. Much of this area is under military control, which precludes residential use. Overall, in 2014, there were 1,211 towns in Israel. This includes 125 Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Nearly 90 percent of Israeli towns are Jewish. They are distributed among six official national districts: Jerusalem, North, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Center, and South; in addition, there are Jewish settlements in the West Bank (and during the period 1967-2005 also in Gaza).

Over the seven decades since statehood, two districts have maintained their share of the population (i.e., their population growth rate was similar to that of the national scene): Jerusalem, whose Jewish population ranged between 10 and 12 percent of the total Israeli Jewish population,

and the North district whose population accounted for between 8 and 10 percent of the total (Figure 4.1). Two districts, Haifa and Tel Aviv, experienced a diminution of approximately half their share of the total population: Haifa district from 21 percent in 1948 to 11 percent at the beginning of 2015; and Tel Aviv from 43 to 20 percent, respectively.

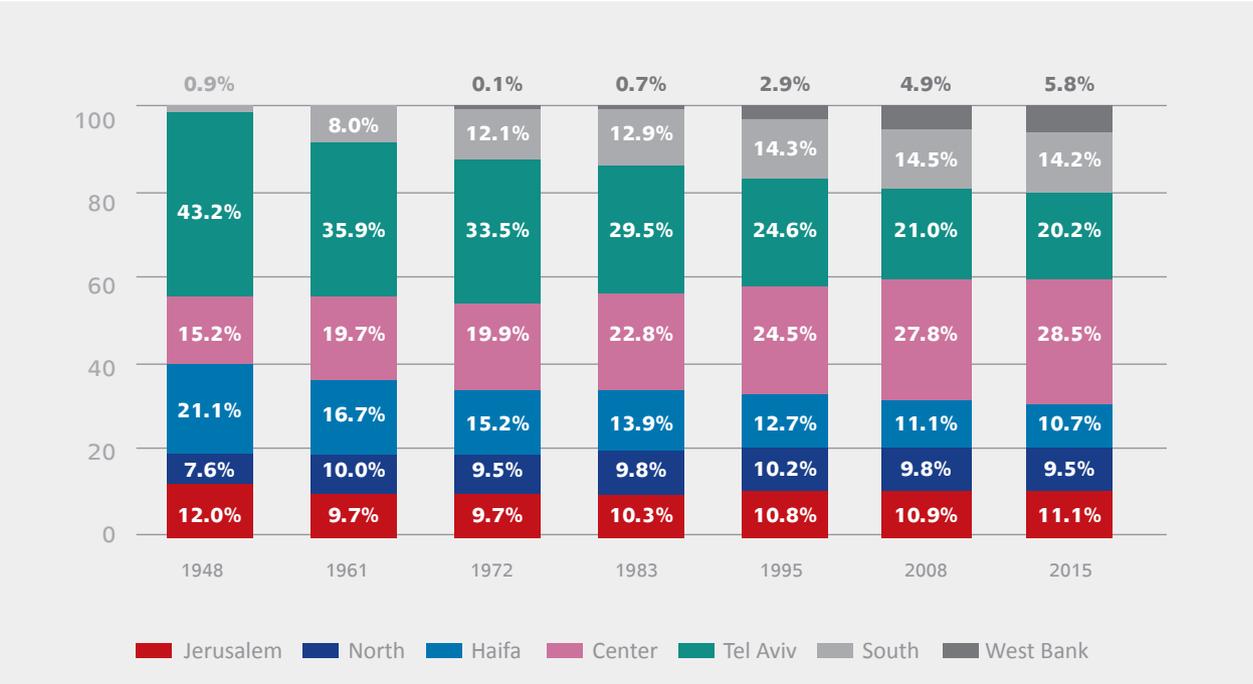
Over time, the Jewish population has concentrated more and more in the Central district, the South, and the West Bank. The increase in the share of the Southern area lasted until the mid-1990s. The next several years will bear out whether and to what extent the intense development of the Negev, especially the relocation of large military bases there from the center of the country, will be

accompanied by population movement which can strengthen the South district vis-à-vis other parts of the country. The West Bank today is home for nearly 6 percent of Israel's Jewish population.

For the sake of illustration, we merged into one geographic unit all the areas that were annexed to Israel following the Six-Day War, as well as the Jewish settlements in the West Bank. For this exercise we subtracted the Jewish population of the Golan Heights from the North district, and Jews who reside in the neighborhoods of East Jerusalem from Jerusalem district. In 2015, the Jews in the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank together account for 9.3 percent of the total Israeli Jewish population.

For each district separately, figure 4.2 presents

**Figure 4.1. The Geographic Distribution of Israeli Jewish Population, by Districts, 1948-2015**

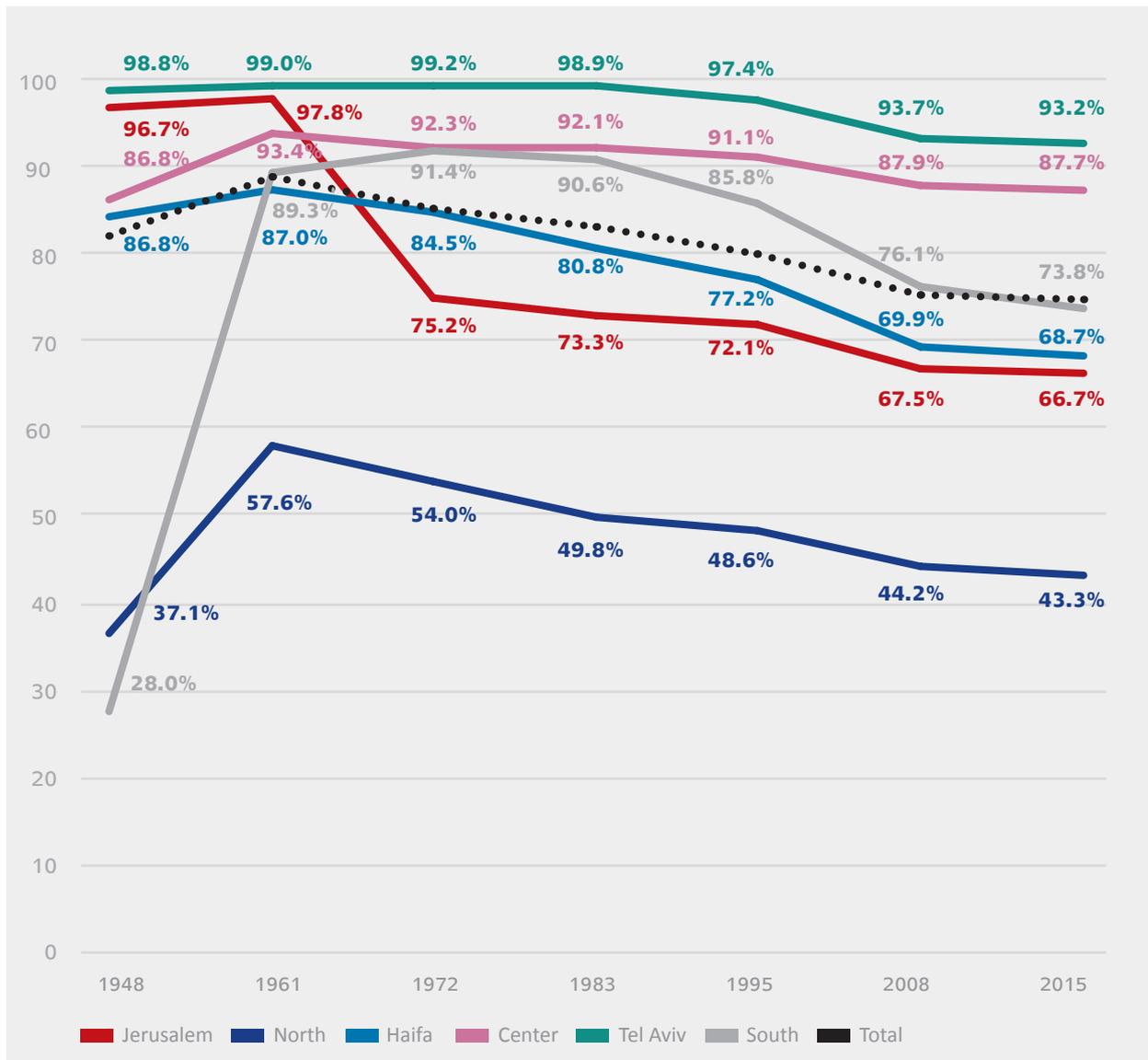


Adopted from CBS, Statistical Abstracts, selected years.

the ratio between the Jewish population and the non-Jewish population, and how this balance has changed over time. In all districts, the share of Jews has diminished and that of non-Jews increased. In 1948, almost the entire population of Jerusalem

district (98 percent) were Jews. Following the unification of the city in 1967 a large number of non-Jews were annexed to the city and, at once, the proportion of Jews declined to three-fourths of the local population and further to two-thirds

Figure 4.2. Percentage of Jews by District of Residence, 1948-2015



Adopted from CBS, Statistical Abstracts, selected years.

today. The North district, which had a slight surplus of Jews following the mass immigration to Israel, is characterized today by a non-Jewish majority. The Haifa district has experienced a decline in the share of Jews: from 85 percent in 1948 to only slightly more than two-thirds today. Two districts – Tel Aviv and Center, kept the Jewish/non-Jewish equilibrium fairly stable with a clear majority of the former (around 90 percent). Also, in the South, the 1961 robust 89 percent Jewish majority has declined to less than two-thirds today.

Overall, in each of the three districts, Jerusalem, North and Haifa, the proportion of Jews is lower than their share in the national population (three-fourth); in one district, the South, the share of Jews resembles their proportion of the total national population, and in Tel Aviv and Central district there is a higher concentration of Jews relative to their share of the overall Israeli population.

The size of the Jewish population in each district, and their proportion of the total local population, is determined, among other things, by in- and out-migration (internal migration balance). A positive balance is evidence of strong holding factors for veteran inhabitants and pull factors for newcomers; a negative balance indicates push factors that drive people away and dissuade newcomers. Spatial mobility is a widespread phenomenon in Israel. In every year between 2010 and 2014, some 15 thousand people moved from one district to another (including the West Bank).

These internal movements have resulted in population gains in two major areas: Center district

(a surplus of some 50 thousand in-migrants over out-migrants), and Jewish settlements in the West Bank (a gain of some 16 thousand people). The rest of the districts have experienced declining Jewish populations: Jerusalem and Tel Aviv have lost a rather similar number of inhabitants – 29 and 25 thousand respectively; and the two peripheral districts, South and North – approximately 11 and 4 thousand, respectively.

The migration balance of each district has changed slightly over time, fluctuating between high balance (positive or negative) years and years of diminished balance, and so forth. These observations show the tendency of the Israeli Jewish public to prefer the Center district over the North, South and Jerusalem; and to settle in the West Bank. Although we do not have information on the characteristics of the migrants, it stands to reason that the Center has gained mainly secular and traditional inhabitants, while the West Bank migrants have tended to be religious or even Ultra-Orthodox.<sup>2</sup> On one hand, the movement of specific Jewish sub-groups to the Center, and different sub-groups to the West Bank on the other, has resulted in spatial separation, namely physical distance of groups one from another.

## 5. Educational Attainment

Figure 5.1 shows the population distribution by three levels of education: up to 12 years of studies with matriculation; 13-15 years; and 16 or more. The findings clearly attest to a significant improvement in the level of education over time. Among Jews, only 17.7 percent had some

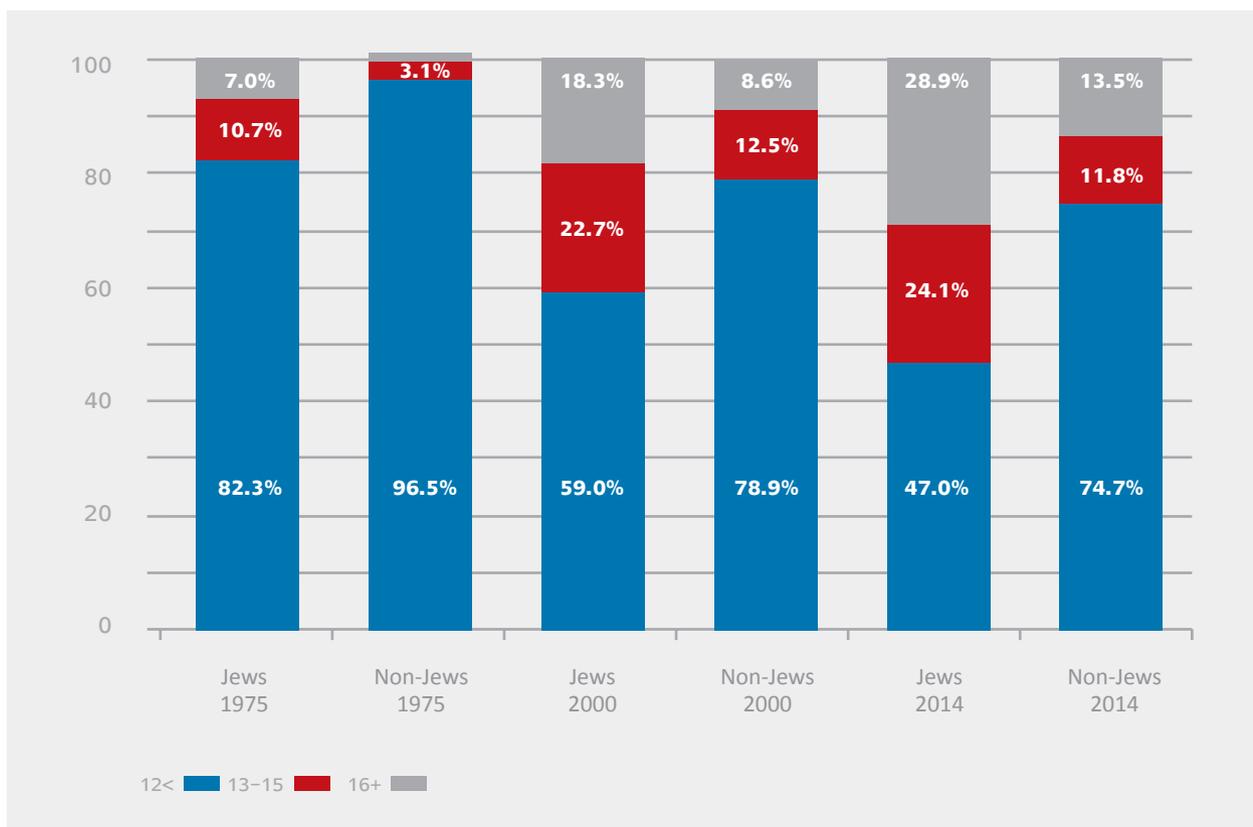
post-secondary education in 1975, by 2000 it had increased to 41 percent, and the figure is as high as 53 percent today. In other words, every second adult Jew in Israel today has some post-high school education. If we look at those with 16 years of education or more, an academic degree, the increase was from 7 percent in 1975 to 28.9 percent today, a fourfold increase.

The non-Jewish population has also experienced an increase in post-secondary education: from 3.5 percent in 1975 to 21.1 percent in 2000, and to 25.3 percent today. The proportion of non-Jews

with 16 years of education or more increased from 1 to 12 percent during this period.

Improvement in educational attainment was faster among Jews than non-Jews. This has resulted in widening gaps between the two groups. The index of dissimilarity, which pertains to the proportion of non-Jews who need to raise their level of education so that their educational profile resembles that of the Jewish population, increased from 11 percent in 1975 to 20 percent in 2000, and is 28 percent today.

**Figure 5.1 Level of Education among Jews and Non-Jews in Israel, 1975-2014**



Adopted from CBS, Statistical Abstracts, selected years.

## 6. Population Projections

What is the anticipated demographic evolution of the Israeli population over the next two decades? We make use of the Central Bureau of Statistics population projections to answer this question. It must be noted that projection is not prophecy; rather, population projections are a mathematical exercise that takes into account the size of the population (by age cohort and sex) at a given starting point and factors in the demographic components of fertility, mortality, and international migration to calculate the increase or decrease of people for the projection period. It is common to utilize alternative scenarios regarding the components of demographic change (low, medium, high). In CBS projections, each scenario

includes different assumptions regarding fertility and international migration; the level of mortality is similar for all scenarios. Below we present the medium projection.

This scenario postulates that the population of the Israel, 8.3 million in 2015, will grow to almost 10 million (9.8) by 2025, and to 11.4 million in 2035. In terms of percentages, in the first decade of the projection the population is expected to increase by 19 percent, and by an expected 16 percent in the second decade.

The non-Jewish population is expected to increase more rapidly than the Jewish population. Hence, the share of Jews (including those of "no religion") is likely to decline by one percent every decade, i.e., from 79 percent in 2015 to 77 percent in 2035.

**Table 6.1. Population Projection for Israel, 2015-2035 (In percentages) (Medium Scenario)**

	2015	2025	2035
Total: Thousand	8,296.9	9,844.9	11,395.6
Percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0
Thereof: Jews (and with no religion)	78.9	78.0	77.1
Non-Jews	21.1	22.0	22.9

## 7. The Population of Jerusalem

We devote a separate section to an in-depth discussion on the population of Jerusalem. At the outset, it should be noted that in the past seven decades, Jerusalem's borders and the placement of physical barriers within the city have changed a number of times. According to the UNSCOP Partition Plan (UN Resolution 181,

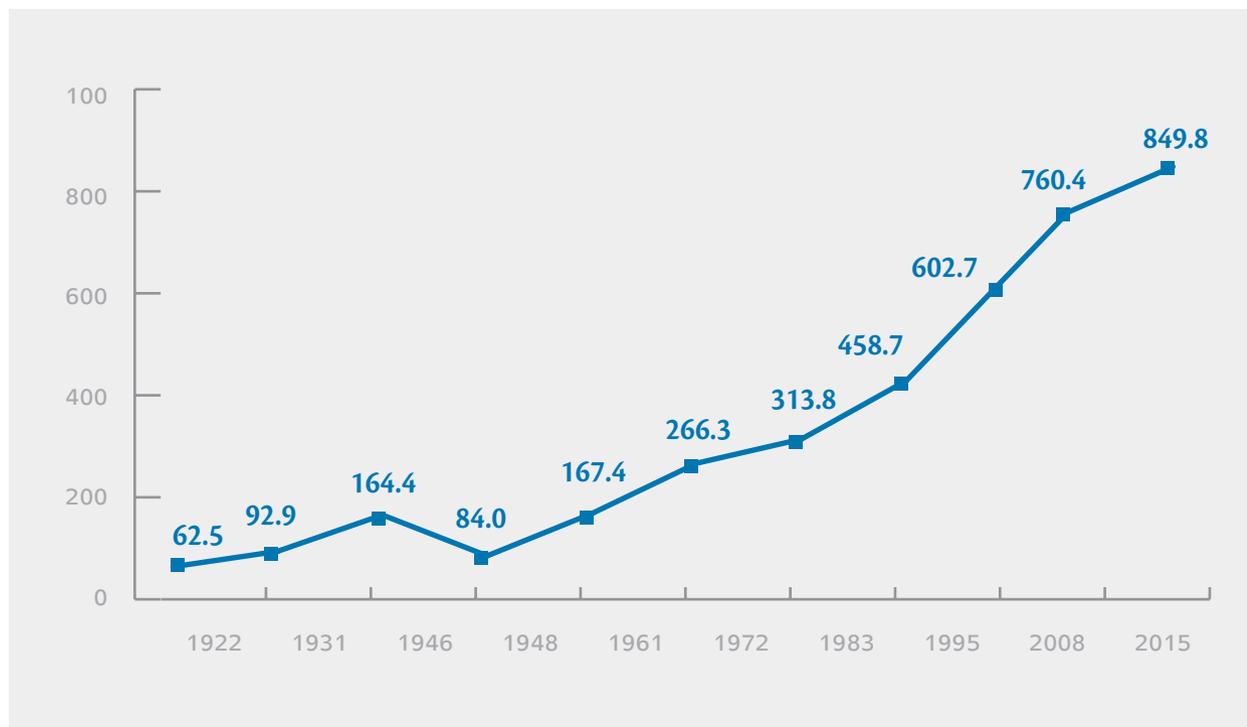
November 29, 1947), Jerusalem was to be a neutral status territory (*corpus separatum*) under UN supervision. After the War of Independence, the city was divided: its western sector under Israeli control, its eastern part controlled by Jordan. Following the Six-Day War, the two parts were unified, and a number of villages not previously part of Jordanian East Jerusalem were added. However, when the separation barrier was built

in the previous decade, a number of Arab villages were left to its east.

On the eve of the state's founding, in 1946, Jerusalem was home to 164,000 residents (Figure 7.1). Following the city's division in 1948, roughly half remained on the western side (84,000). The Israeli census of 1961 recorded a doubling of residents to 167,000. Following the 1967

reunification of Jerusalem, the number of citizens stood at slightly more than a quarter million. It continued to grow as a result of internal demographic trends and the settlement of new immigrants: it reached 428,000 in 1983, and 750,000 in 2008. Jerusalem's population today is 850,000 – Israel's largest city.

**Figure 7.1. Population of Jerusalem, 1922-2015 (in thousands)**



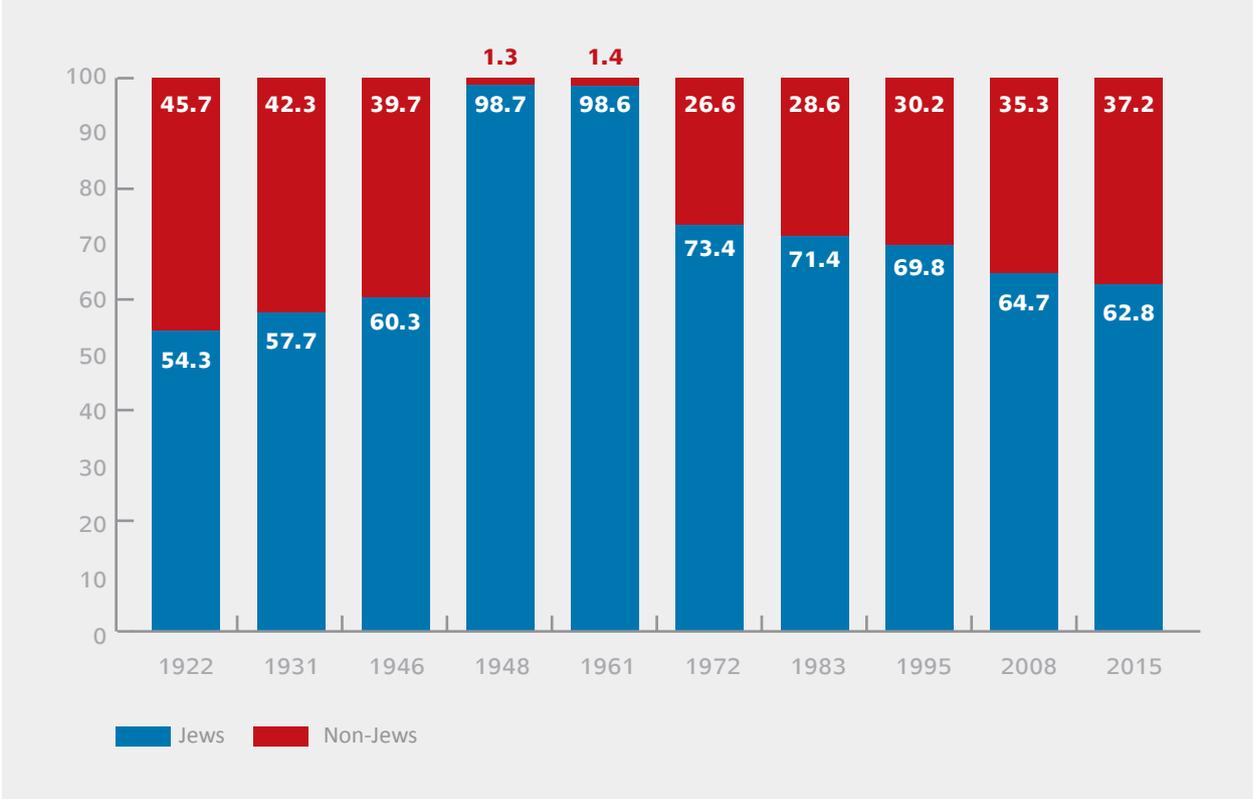
Until 1946: in the British Mandate borders; since the establishment of the state and until the Six-Day's War: 1948 borders; following the Six Day War: the borders of a united Jerusalem.

Source: The Jerusalem Center for Israel Studies, Statistical Yearbook, 2015.

As the number of residents has shifted, so too has the balance between Jews and non-Jews (Figure 7.2). In the latter part of the British Mandate, Jews constituted 60 percent of the city's population. After the city was divided, the western part remained primarily Jewish. The Jewish majority of Jerusalem (western, of course) was more substantial than in the rest of the country – 99 percent of Jerusalem versus 85 percent of

the entire country. With the reunification of Jerusalem, the non-Jewish residents of the eastern sector were added, and all at once the proportion of Jews was reduced to three-quarters. Since then, the growth of the non-Jewish population has been more rapid than that of the Jewish population. At the beginning of 2015, Jerusalem's Jews constituted 62.8 percent of the city's population, a proportion lower than that of Jews in all of Israel.

**Figure 7.2. Jerusalem's Population according to Population Groups, 1922-2015 (Percentages)**



The balance between Jews and non-Jews differs in each part of the city. While in the western part, almost all the residents are Jewish, in the eastern part, Jews constitute 40 percent. However, in absolute terms, in the Jewish neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city and the old city, there are 200,000 Jews altogether.

Analysis of the five-year period between 2009 and 2013 shows that the growth of Jerusalem's Jewish population was due to natural growth, the settling of new immigrants, an internal migration balance with other cities and towns, and a balance between expat Israelis and those who returned (Table 7.1). Although the natural movement and settling of immigrants increased the number of Jews in the city, the internal balance of migration was negative, by approximately 37,000 people. (Some moved to secular Jewish cities near Jerusalem, such as Mevaseret Zion or to further away places, such as Tel Aviv. Others left Jerusalem for Haredi settlements or the ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods of Beit Shemesh, Modi'in Illit, and

Beitar Illit, and some went to non-Haredi West Bank settlements.) The loss of residents from internal migration canceled out half the increase of the Jewish population from natural growth and Aliyah. The balance between new immigrants and the number of Jerusalem residents leaving Israel is also negative. Among non-Jews, natural growth and family unification account for a population rise, while internal migration brings it down slightly. All told, 31,000 were added to the Jewish population in the past five years, and 40,000 to the non-Jewish population, which means that Jerusalem's Jewish population grew at a slower pace than its non-Jewish population.

In each of the years between 2009 and 2013, non-Jewish population growth outstripped Jewish growth by a percentage point or two. Despite this, new data published on Jerusalem Day by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies show that in 2014, the growth rate of the Jewish population increased considerably and was close to that of the non-Jewish population. In other words, as

**Table 7.1. Components of Jewish and Non-Jewish Population Growth in Jerusalem, 2009-2013.**

Population Groups	Natural Growth	Immigrants	Internal migration	International Balance of Israeli immigration/ Family Unification	Total Growth
Jews	57.6	15.3	-37.2	-4.7	31.0
Non-Jews	36.7	0	-1.3	4.5	39.9

opposed to previous years when the non-Jewish population grew at a much higher rate than the Jewish one, in 2014 the two demographics grew at a more similar rate. Each of the three factors mentioned had an effect on this: a rise in the Jewish population's natural growth rates (mostly among its Haredi population), a reduction in the Jewish population's negative internal migration balance, and an increased number of new immigrants choosing to live in Jerusalem.

However, the proportion of Jews in Jerusalem is on a consistently downward trajectory. At this time, it is difficult to determine if the new data showing a narrowing growth rate gap between Jews and non-Jews signals a long-term development that will stabilize the balance between the two groups at the current level, or whether it represents a temporary change only, and, in the coming years, the non-Jewish growth rate will once again be greater than the Jewish one. In the second instance, it is even possible that the Jewish population will cease to be a majority in the city, perhaps by mid-century.

## **8. Discussion and Policy Implications**

Over the course of 68 years of statehood, Israel has experienced far reaching demographic trends. The size and composition of the Israeli population changed unrecognizably. This reflects different demographic patterns among its major sub-groups. Demography should be viewed a paramount factor in planning and policy making that seeks to maintain the Jewish and democratic character of the country, in which the Jewish

people materializes its right for self-determination as well as for keeping the country's social and economic strength.

We believe the following ten observations are pivotal for understanding Israeli demography. Each of them has a practical implication. Of course, every intervention, whether governmental or otherwise, should carefully guaranty equality between groups and adhere to international principles of human rights. We suggest that informed policy be implemented by means of negotiation and careful attention to the needs of the groups at stake.

### **1) Population Size and Composition**

The number of Israeli inhabitants is steadily on the rise. The pace of growth is mainly affected by trends in immigration to Israel and changes in fertility patterns. In the midst of these processes the equilibrium between the two major components of the population, Jews and non-Jews, has remained fairly stable. We consider individuals of "no religion," namely immigrants who are not Halachically Jewish but were granted the right to settle in Israel under the Law of Return, as belonging to the Jewish population. Ways should be found to officially incorporate them into the Jewish group, chiefly through easing the conversion process.

### **2) Fertility**

The fertility level of Israeli Jews is high in comparison to other developed countries. Substantial differences exist between ultra-Orthodox, religious, and secular Jews. Because

of the low number of children among secular women, and in light of recent empirical evidence that the intended number of children by secular woman is higher by one child than the actual level<sup>3</sup>, we suggest exploring ways to encourage greater fertility among this group. Fertility level among Muslim women has diminished over time, and has pretty much converged with that of Jewish women; this is a major dimension of successful social integration of Arabs into the Israeli society.

### **3) Life Expectancy**

The life expectancy of Israelis is growing. Jews, men and women alike, live longer than their respective non-Jewish counterparts. Life expectancy gaps between Jews and non-Jews have widened slightly over time. The life expectancy of non-Jews resembles that of Jews 15 years back. Attempts should be made to find the reasons for these variations and develop policies to gradually reduce these gaps. Such policies are likely to improve the quality of life of the non-Jewish inhabitants and strengthen their feeling of being equal citizens of the state.

### **4) Immigration**

The overwhelming majority of Diaspora Jewry today resides in developed and democratic countries. Overall, they are not exposed to any political, economic, or social oppression that might push them to leave their home countries and settle elsewhere. Yet, occasionally, different areas undergo political unrest or a shaking of the personal safety of their inhabitants, Jews included. Recently, this has been salient in Ukraine and France as well as in Turkey (although the number of Jews there is small). Agencies responsible for immigration to

Israel should prepare for such opportunities by examining the needs and expectations of potential immigrants, and directing appropriate resources to encourage immigration and ensure successful absorption in Israel.

### **5) Emigration**

Although the number of Jews who leave the country is small, it is somewhat on the rise. We know from earlier studies that many of those who depart have the high human capital that comes with education and occupations in advanced technology and research. Recently, Israelis abroad have been making efforts to establish organizations and institutionalize their connection to Israel. The State of Israel should do more to assist young people in finding jobs that suit their professional qualifications, lower housing prices for young families, and diminish inter-group tensions in order to keep young Israelis in the country. Concurrently, the government should maintain ties with Israelis abroad and nurture their commitment to Israel.

### **6) Spatial Distribution**

The spatial distribution of the Israeli population does not reveal special concerns. Major alterations in recent years have taken place in the core area of the country, namely the declining weight of Tel Aviv in favor of the Central district. To a large extent, the North and South districts, as well as Jerusalem, have maintained their share of the Jewish population. Yet, spatial planning should direct attention toward how to attract more Jews to the North, which is the only district that does not have a Jewish majority.

## 7) Education

The educational attainment of the Israeli population is gradually improving. This is true for Jews and non-Jews alike. However, the pace of growth is faster among the former, hence gaps between the two groups are widening. More resources should be allocated to raising the educational level in the non-Jewish sector, including the rate of those attaining matriculation diplomas, which enable them to study in universities and colleges.

## 8) Projection

The Israeli population is expected to continue to increase over the next two decades. The non-Jewish population will grow slightly faster than the Jewish population. However, this will not cause a substantial change in the balance between the two groups. Attempts to enhance immigration to Israel and diminish emigration out from Israel will complement each other and strengthen the Jewish component of the population.

## 9) Jerusalem

In the public debate, some claim geography is more important than demography, and that one should not interfere in processes underway within the city's population, even at the price of losing a Jewish majority. Related to this, one should keep in mind that East Jerusalem's Arabs can vote and run for city council seats as well as the mayorship. Until now, most have not chosen to exercise this right, but a change in approach, or a decision by the Palestinian leadership to participate in municipal elections, could bring a change to the face of the city council or even the mayor's office.

Others, who wish to ensure and strengthen Jerusalem's Jewish majority can examine two policy measures in different but complementary directions.

a) The first is to implement measures to reinforce or accelerate the trend narrowing the negative balance of internal migration, such as job creation and the availability of affordable housing – especially for younger graduates of the city's academic institutions (in the spirit of the recent June 2, 2016 government decision on the occasion of Jerusalem Day). Related to this, the government should take steps to raise and ensure the quality of life for non-Jewish citizens, especially in East Jerusalem. Non-Jewish Jerusalemites must be better integrated into the city's social, economic, and cultural fabric to ensure peace and quiet. Conditions such as these will retain more residents in the city and raise the appeal of Jerusalem to new populations.

To ensure that these changes help reduce the rate of out-migration from Jerusalem and increase the number of new residents, we recommend strengthening the image of Jerusalem as a safe, developing, pleasant and special place to live.

b) A different policy measure could be changing the municipal borders of Jerusalem either westward or eastward, without altering Israel's sovereign status over these areas. Shifting the border westward by annexing existing Jewish towns; or shrinking the current municipal boundaries, for example along the current route of the security barrier, perhaps even moving it in order to shift a number of Arab neighborhoods and villages to its eastern side.

Of course any unilateral step that would remove tens of thousands of Arab residents from the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem would need to be well conceived and implemented in a cautious manner to safeguard employment status, welfare rights, and the ability to maintain connections with relatives who will continue to reside within Jerusalem proper. Moreover, moves such as these must be cognizant of relevant political and security considerations.

### 10) Jerusalem and Diaspora Jewry

It is also important to take into account the viewpoint of Diaspora Jewry, much of which supports a united Jerusalem and would likely favor a Jewish-majority Jerusalem. While Diaspora Jewry holds little connection to the neighborhoods on the eastern side of the security fence, they see this physical barrier and its implications on the daily life and living conditions of the Arab residents, as something that does not sit well with their often-liberal views. A policy that would strengthen the Jewish majority of Jerusalem while improving the life of the non-Jewish population could receive greater support from world Jewry, and could even help strengthen its identification with Israel.

In recent years, we have witnessed meaningful changes in the cultural and leisure life of the city. The public spaces of Jerusalem have become more accessible and appropriate to a young population, and for families with children from all sectors, including the secular. This is praiseworthy and should continue.

\*

In sum, judged by different complementary measures, we assess that Israeli demography is developing in positive directions. Still, several areas require interventions that will strengthen the Jewish character of the country in general and its capital city in particular. Equality between Jews and non-Jews should be enhanced. We believe that the targets presented above and the proposed means to achieve them could be embraced by the overwhelming majority of Israel's citizenry.

## Endnotes

- 1 Beside these Jews there are in the United States another million people who self-define themselves "partly Jewish"; as well as some 350,000 people in Israel of "no religion" who are immigrants and their descendants who met the criteria of the Law of Return but are not halachical Jewish and, at the same time, are not affiliated with any other religion.
- 2 Notably, there are attempts to attract religious population to the Center (such as religious nuclei). At the same time, various estimates suggest that about one-third of the Jews in the West Bank are secular.
- 3 Sergio DellaPergola. 2009. "Actual, Intended, and Appropriate Family Size among Jews in Israel". *Contemporary Jewry* 29: 127-152.



## Looking at Jewish Pluralism in Israel

One of the ongoing sticking points in Israel-Diaspora relations is the disconnect between Israel's Jewish-Israeli public space and the expectations of some Jewish communities throughout the world. Non-Israeli Jews (and quite a few Israelis) complain of the lack of Jewish 'pluralism' in Israel. They mainly refer to the fact that Orthodox Judaism in Israel is accorded superior status to that of other Jewish denominations. This year, the never-ending saga of the conflict over non-Orthodox space at the Western Wall prompted some to protest Israel's lack of resolve in adapting certain aspects of Jewish life to meet the expectations of Diaspora Jews, even when compromise decisions are reached for doing exactly that.

A JPPI study conducted earlier this year reveals a **built-in difficulty in bringing about an accepted mode of Jewish pluralism in Israel** because, despite widespread agreement over the need for tolerance and diversity, **the question of what Jewish pluralism is supposed to look like and exactly what it implies** is in dispute. It is also

difficult to persuade the Jewish public that a change is needed since 90 percent of Israeli Jews feel comfortable living in Israel "just the way they are." As far as they are concerned, no acute problem exists that absolutely necessitates change. Moreover, among those with a higher comfort level the study found a right-leaning political and religious orientation. Thus, the coalition presently managing Israel's affairs seems representative of contented Jews who feel comfortable with the existing situation.

The Pluralism in Israel survey was conducted as part of a broader JPPI project examining pluralism in Israel. Integral to this project was the establishment of a Pluralism Index with the capacity to track changes and trends concerning the ability of different Israeli communities to live alongside each other in mutual respect.<sup>1</sup> The first iteration of the Pluralism Index, released in May 2016, focused exclusively on Israeli Jews, under the working definition of Jewish pluralism as: "The condition in which Jews of different social classes, ideologies, religious streams, levels of beliefs and

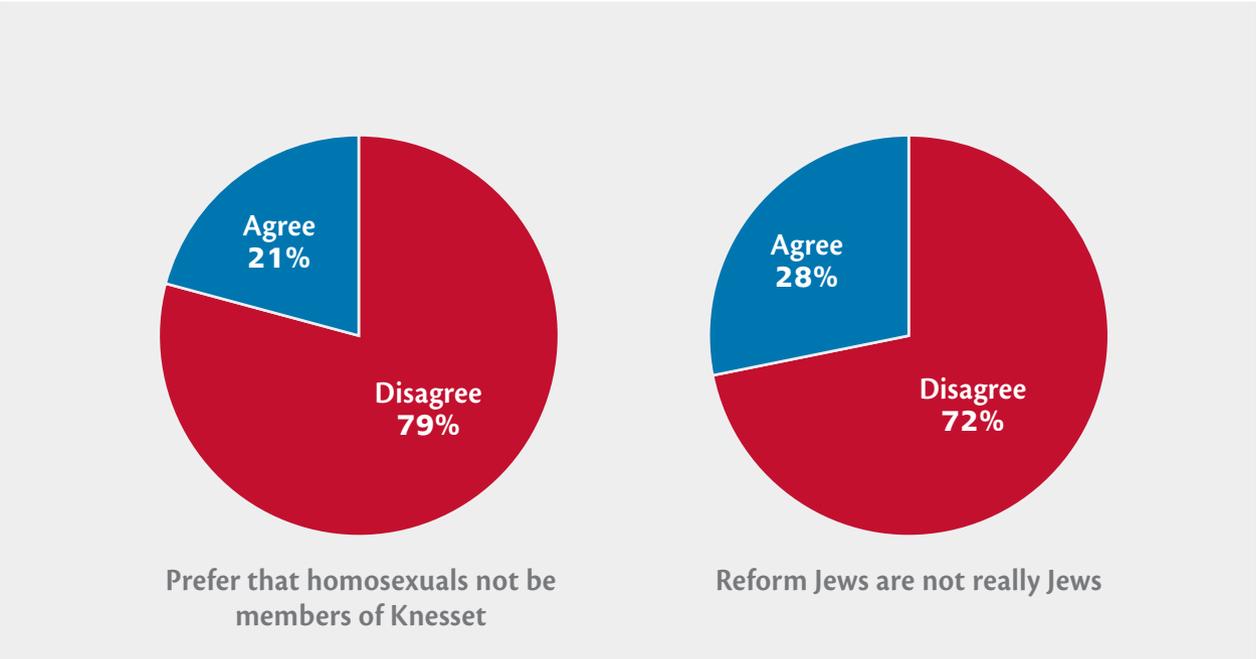
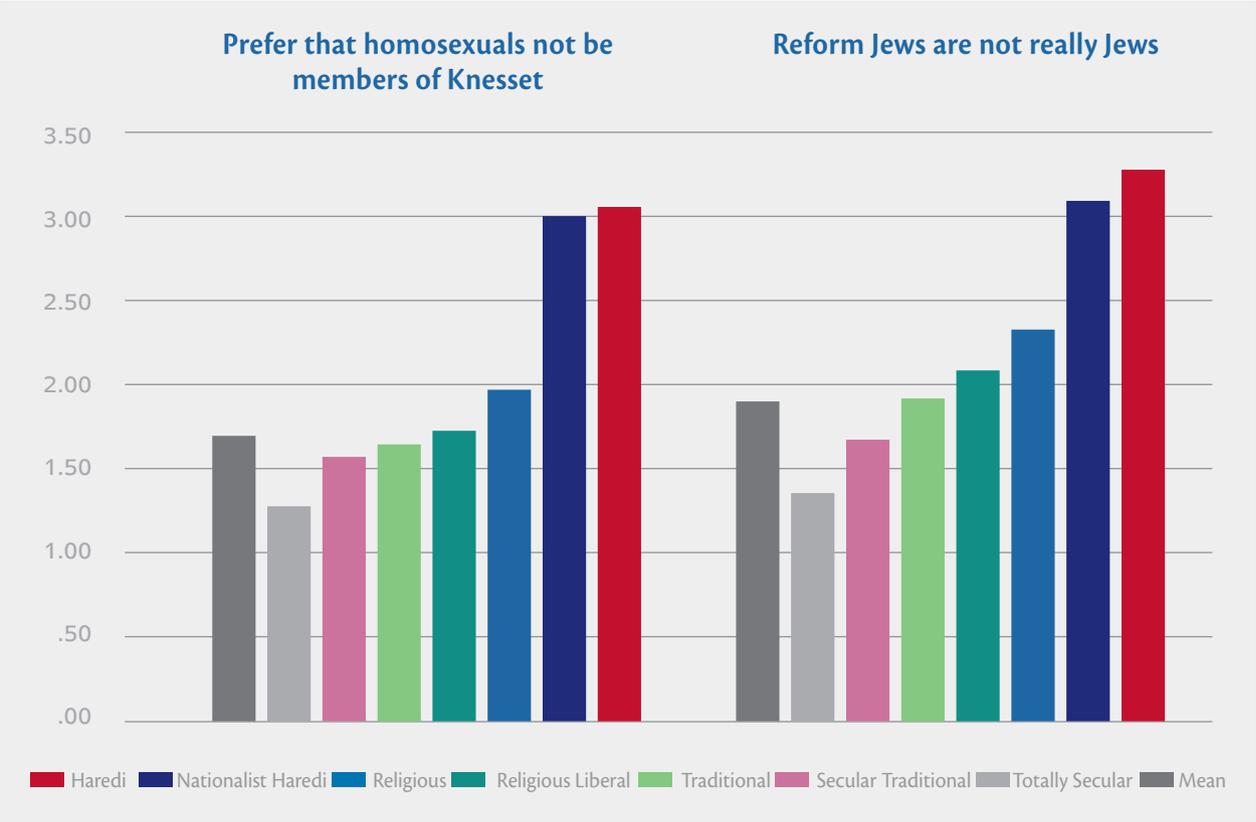
practices, genders, and ethnic backgrounds have equal opportunity to legitimately exercise their differences in the public sphere.”

The Institute's study reveals that different Jewish groups in Israel tend to accept the undergirding assumption that variation among Jews is natural and legitimate, and that it doesn't necessarily harm national unity. For example, the statement that "religious, traditional and secular Jews are all equally good Jews" is broadly agreed upon<sup>2</sup> as is the statement "the Israeli government needs to be much more considerate of minority opinions." Nevertheless, other significant studies conducted this year in Israel<sup>3</sup> show that gaps exist between different groups on numerous fundamental issues, according to both political orientation and level of religiosity. For example, in regard to the question of whether Israel should allow civil marriage, the extent of agreement increases as one moves along the religious spectrum, from religious to secular, as it does when moving along the political scale from right to left.

Additionally, gaps are evident in the fundamental attitudes of different Jewish population groups toward one another. From a religious standpoint, for example, the *secular*, the *secular but somewhat traditional*, and the traditional sectors have an extremely negative estimation of the *Haredi* sector's contribution to the country. On the other hand, the religious sector (*liberal-religious, traditionally religious, and Haredi*) has a correspondingly negative opinion concerning the contribution of *Reform* Jews to the country. Left-leaning Israelis have a rather negative opinion of settlers, while right-leaning Israelis have a clearly negative opinion of those to their left.

Unsurprisingly, this and other studies reveal a gap between the positions of Jews in Israel and the positions of Jews in other Diaspora communities. This will likely make any attempt to fashion a Jewish pluralistic space that would enable large numbers of Jews to “feel at home” in Israel difficult. The government of Israel has a significant role to play in dealing with this challenge, primarily: sketching out a policy that strives to strike an optimal balance enabling as many Jewish groups as possible to express their Judaism in the public sphere amid an atmosphere of mutual respect. A striking example of the difficulty Israel faces involves an issue the government has dealt with over the past year, and which has not yet been fully resolved. The majority of those with an opinion among Israeli Jews do not accept the position that "we should allow women to put on *tefillin* at the Western Wall" – a position widely accepted in Jewish communities worldwide. In the eyes of many, this issue is a litmus test for assessing the state of Jewish pluralism in Israel.

Furthermore, within the Israeli society there is a fierce dispute between different Jewish groups over the question of permitting women to pray at the Western Wall. This disagreement can even be seen between those who define themselves as “totally secular” and those who define themselves as “secular and somewhat traditional” (see graph).<sup>4</sup> And, as mentioned, Jews are distinguished not only by their attitudes to positions but also to other groupings of Jews. Thus, in their attitude toward the two statements "It's preferable for homosexuals not

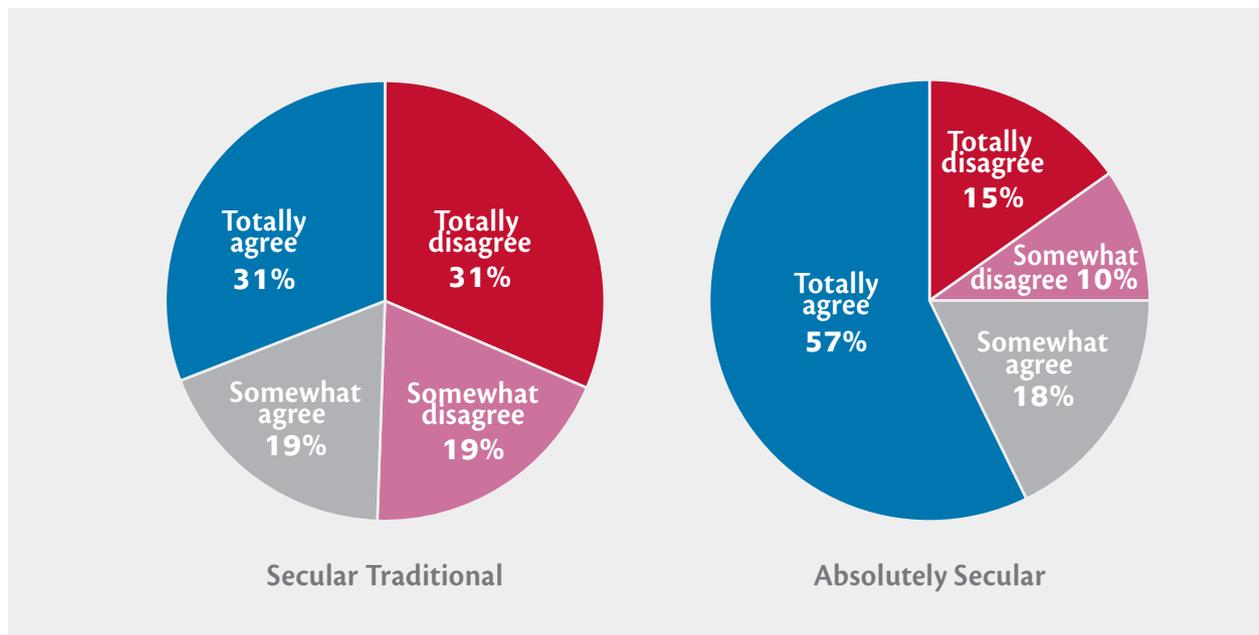


to be members of Knesset" and "Reform Jews aren't really Jews," a clear Jewish-Israeli majority disagrees with both (79 percent don't agree that it's problematic having homosexuals serving as Knesset members, and 72 percent do not agree that Reform Jews aren't really Jews). Once again, significant gaps are found in positions toward these groups (homosexuals and Reform Jews) based on religiosity levels (see graph).

Several of the Institute's studies performed this year under the umbrella of the Pluralism project reveal that Jews in Israel – and in other places around the world – often have difficulty (sometimes considerable difficulty) in supplying consistent answers when asked to consider their Jewish identity and how it can coexist with the Jewish identities of others.

In Israel, for example, this difficulty comes into sharp relief when trying to reconcile the stance of half of Israeli Jews who say that it is "quite important" or "very important" to "live in a place that is as diverse as possible in every aspect" with the fact that most also say that it is "quite important" or "very important" to live in a place where the majority of citizens are similar with respect to religion.<sup>5</sup> Or, when we address the gap between the wide agreement that "all are good Jews" (with regard to religious and secular Jews) and the tendency of certain groups, mainly the religious and Haredi, to state that Reform Jews "aren't really Jews." In other words, the tolerance of religious Jews in Israel toward secular Jews, a considerable portion of whom are theologically indifferent, does not extend to tolerance for Jews whose beliefs challenge orthodoxy.

### Women should be allowed to put on T'filin at the Western Wall (Kotel)



This Jewish state of affairs in Israel, which exhibits both the aspiration for unity and deep divisions, muddles the perceived willingness of different groups to fashion a way of life in Israel that grants all Jews "equal opportunity to express their variance in a legitimate manner in the public arena." At the same time, it complicates the task of characterizing precisely the state of Jewish pluralism in Israel. Thus, what one group of Jews perceives to be detrimental to pluralism – for example, segregating men and women at various events – is perceived by other Jews as demonstrative of pluralism (after all, separation allows Jews who normally would be prevented from participating in such events to take part in them). At bottom, the fundamental nature of pluralism is an openness to divisions of opinion. Therefore, any attempt to measure pluralism must take into account the points of departure of both the measurers and the measured, and characterize the trends accordingly.

## Endnotes

- 1 The Institute's survey was conducted among 1,032 Jews in Israel via Panels Politics and supervised by survey expert Menachem Lazar. A portion of the sample was surveyed online and the other by phone. The data were analyzed by the Institute's staff: Prof. Steven Popper, Prof. Uzi Rebhun, Dr. Shlomo Fischer, and Noah Slepko.
- 2 For a detailed presentation containing more aspects of the data appearing in this document, see: [www.jppi.org.il](http://www.jppi.org.il)
- 3 See the study conducted by the esteemed Pew Research Center and published in March 2016: Israel's Religiously Divided Society. <http://www.pewforum.org/2016/03/08/israels-religiously-divided-society/>.
- 4 In the survey conducted by the Institute we differentiated between seven groups based on their level of religiosity: totally secular (31%), secular and somewhat traditional (21%), traditional (23%), liberal religious (4%), religious (10%), national-Haredi (1%), and Haredi (10%).
- 5 In regard to diversity: 35.1% responded 'quite important', 22.6% 'very important'. As for religiosity: 29% responded 'quite important', 25.9% 'very important'. Respondents did not ascribe similarly high importance to living alongside Israelis with the same denominational origin, age or income level; however, they did ascribe importance to education level (although not to the same extent as religiosity level).



# What are the Main Components of Jewishness? Results of JPPI Surveys

## Summary

Connected Jews from different communities and backgrounds claim that "Peoplehood" and "Culture" are the main components of Judaism – more than "Religion" and "Ancestry." And while we cannot always know for sure what they mean by that, there are clues in the way they answer questions about the practicalities of Jewish life: They value "caring for other Jews" more than "keeping the laws of the Torah."

## Report

"What is Judaism?" is the underlying question for those seeking to explain what "Jewishness" means to a variety of Jews from different backgrounds and armed with different beliefs. In this chapter it is not our ambition to definitively answer such a complex and loaded question. Rather, our goal is to shed some light on what some Jews say about the meaning of Judaism and their definition of

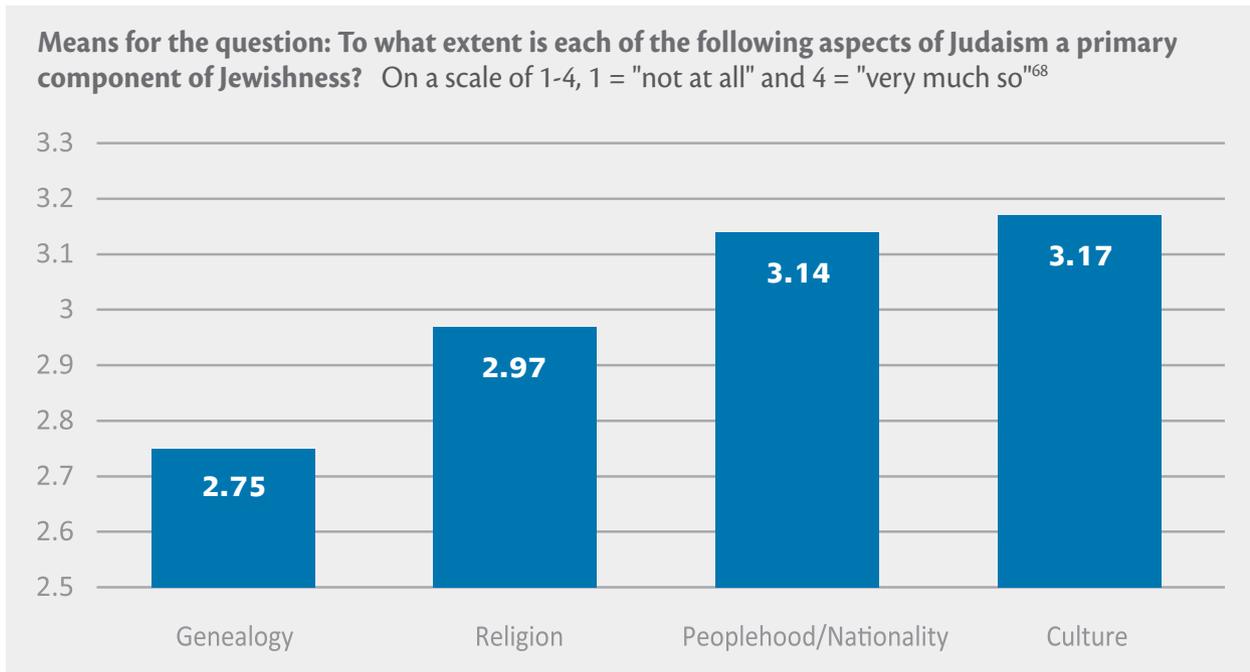
it.<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a section from JPPI's report on the 2016 World Jewish Structured Dialogue that considered: Exploring the Jewish Spectrum in a Time of Fluid Identity.

This is the third year JPPI has conducted a global Dialogue process. Last year (2015), the topic was "Jewish Values and Israel's Use of Force in Armed Conflict."<sup>2</sup> The year before (2014) focused on Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State.<sup>3</sup> In both cases, JPPI's concluding reports were recognized as significant achievements in advancing the Israel-Diaspora discourse.<sup>4</sup> This chapter, taken from the Dialogue's final report to the communities, is based on research carried out by JPPI during the Dialogue, and also on JPPI's research carried out for its Pluralism Index, which included a large survey of Israeli Jews. In both the Dialogue survey and JPPI's Pluralism in Israel survey we asked respondents to rank the importance of four definitions that could explain what Judaism means to them. The exact question

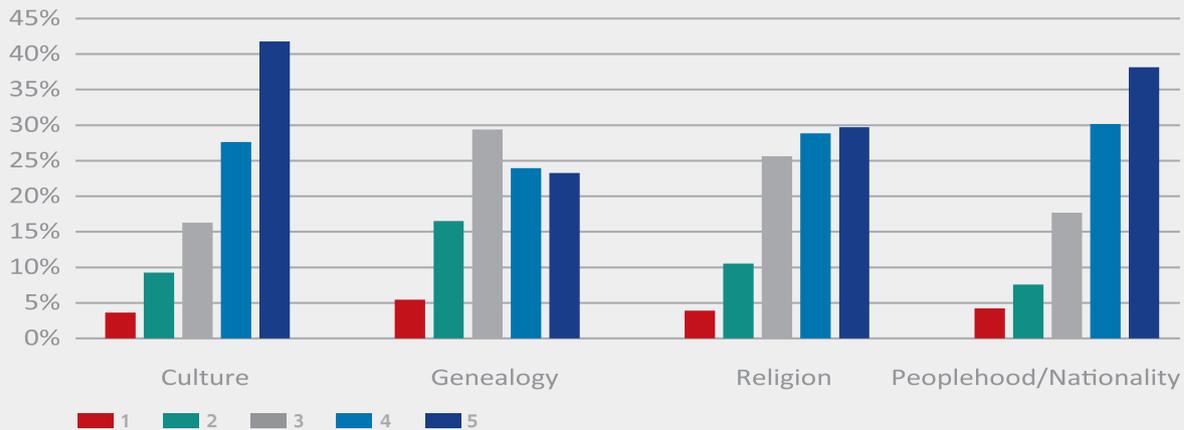
in the Dialogue survey was: “To what extent is each of the following aspects of Judaism a primary component of Jewishness: Religion; Culture; Genealogy; and Nationality\Peoplehood? (1 = “not at all” a primary component of Jewishness, and 5 = “very much so” a primary component of Jewishness.)<sup>5</sup>

A word of caution: Because when we asked about “religion” or “culture,” we did not define the terms but rather relied on the personal meaning each participant attaches to these terms, we must take into account the subjectivity involved in understanding terms such as “nationality,” “religion” and “culture.”

That said, we still believe that how Dialogue participants ranked these four terms is telling: “culture” and “nationality\peoplehood” ranked highest. The more traditional definitions – religion and genealogy – lagged behind. So a first impression clearly points to the possibility that Jews today feel more comfortable with definitions of their Jewishness that are compatible with non-religious, non-traditional lives.<sup>6</sup> And this is the case, as a Dialogue participant in Philadelphia noted, even when the criteria of belonging to Judaism they follow is religious in nature: “We are using religious definitions to be a part of a nation of a people. Yet many are part of this people, who have no feeling of religion.”<sup>7</sup>



**How participants ranked the categories: To what extent is each of the following aspects of Judaism a primary component of Jewishness? On a scale of 1-5, 1 = "not at all" and 5 = "very much so"**



Similar examinations of Jewish ranking of these categories are available to us in studies of Israeli and North American Jews, the two communities that together constitute the vast majority of Jews.<sup>8</sup> JPPI's Pluralism in Israel survey of early 2016 included a question very similar to one of the Dialogue survey questions.<sup>9</sup> The two Pew Research Center studies of Israel (2016) and of US Jews (2013) included a different question on the same topic.<sup>10</sup>

What we clearly see in all these reports is that:

**1. Nationality is by far the most important identity component to Jewish Israelis.** Eighty-one percent ranked Le'om (nationality) as being either "highly significant" or "somewhat significant" (56 and 25 percent respectively); Culture ranked second (76 percent, 42 and 34 percent respectively); Religion was ranked third (68 percent, 45 and 23 percent respectively); and Motza (ancestry/genealogy) was ranked last (42 percent, 19 and 23 percent respectively).

- 2. Religion is not the main component of Judaism:** A minority of both Jewish Americans and Israelis consider religion to be the main component of Jewishness. The two Pew studies showed that only 22 percent of Israeli Jews regard Judaism mainly as a religion; the number drops to 15 percent for Jewish Americans. An attempt to interpret Judaism solely as a religion (to make it compatible with modern realities in which Diaspora Jews live) would not resonate with the current generation of Jews.
- 3. Orthodox put more emphasis on religion:** Orthodox respondents thought religion to be the main feature of Jewishness, ranking it higher than the other identity components.<sup>11</sup> This is seen in the Pew studies, and also in JPPI's Pluralism in Israel survey in which "totally secular" Israeli Jews rated Religion 2.15 (on a 1-4 scale of importance); 3.05 for "secular somewhat traditional." For religious

Israeli Jews Religion rated a 3.75 by National Religious (Dati-Leumi) respondents, and 3.88 by Haredi respondents).

It is important to mention that “totally secular” Israeli Jews tended to rank all options lower than other Jews overall, both in Israel and

elsewhere. “Totally secular” Israeli Jews constitute approximately a third of Israel’s total Jewish population – 32 percent according to JPPI’s Pluralism in Israel survey. This is probably due to a generally lower enthusiasm about Judaism on the part of this group.

**Pew Surveys: Percent of Jews in U.S. and in Israel who say being Jewish, to them personally, is mainly a matter of...**

	Religion	Ancestry/Culture	Both
<b>U.S. Jews</b>	15%	62%	23%
Orthodox	46%	15%	38%
Non-Orthodox	11%	68%	21%
	Religion	Nationality/Culture	Both
<b>Israeli Jews</b>	22%	55%	23%
Orthodox	60%	10%	30%
Non-Orthodox	11%	68%	20%

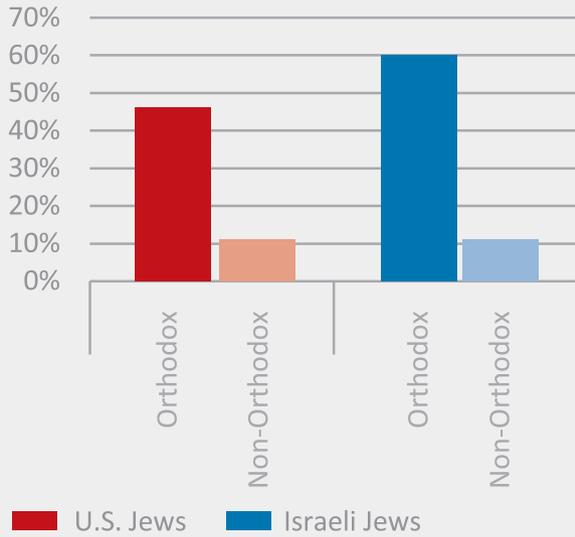
**JPPI’s 2016 Dialogue Survey (U.S. participants): To what extent is each of the following aspects of Judaism a primary component of Jewishness? Mean response on a scale of 1-4, 1 = not at all important, 4 = very important:**

	Religion	Nationality/Peoplehood	Culture	Genealogy
<b>U.S. Jews</b>	3.07	3.2	3.06	2.8
Orthodox	3.32	2.9	2.51	3.32
Non-Orthodox	3.02	3.26	3.13	2.71

**JPPI’s 2016 Pluralism in Israel survey: To what extent is each of the following aspects of Judaism a primary component of Jewishness? Mean response on a scale of 1-4:**

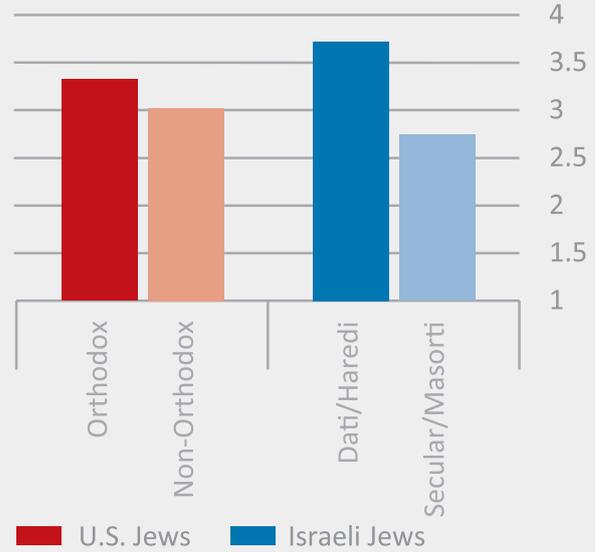
	Religion	Nationality	Culture	Ethnicity
<b>Israeli Jews</b>	2.99	3.32	3.12	2.99
Dati/Haredi	3.72	3.56	2.95	2.27
Secular/Masorti	2.74	3.24	3.18	2.30

**Pew Survey: percent of Jews in U.S. and in Israel who say being Jewish, to them personally, is mainly a matter of religion.**



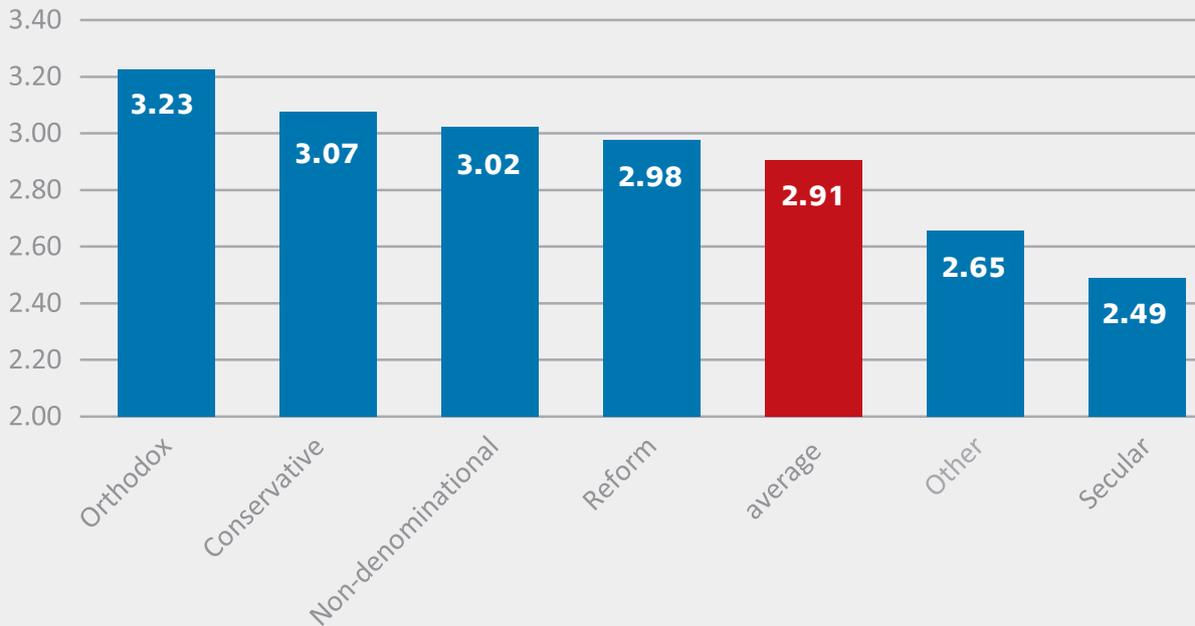
**JJPI surveys: To what extent is religion a primary component of Jewishness?**

Mean response on a scale of 1-4:



**To what extent is religion a primary aspect of Jewishness?**

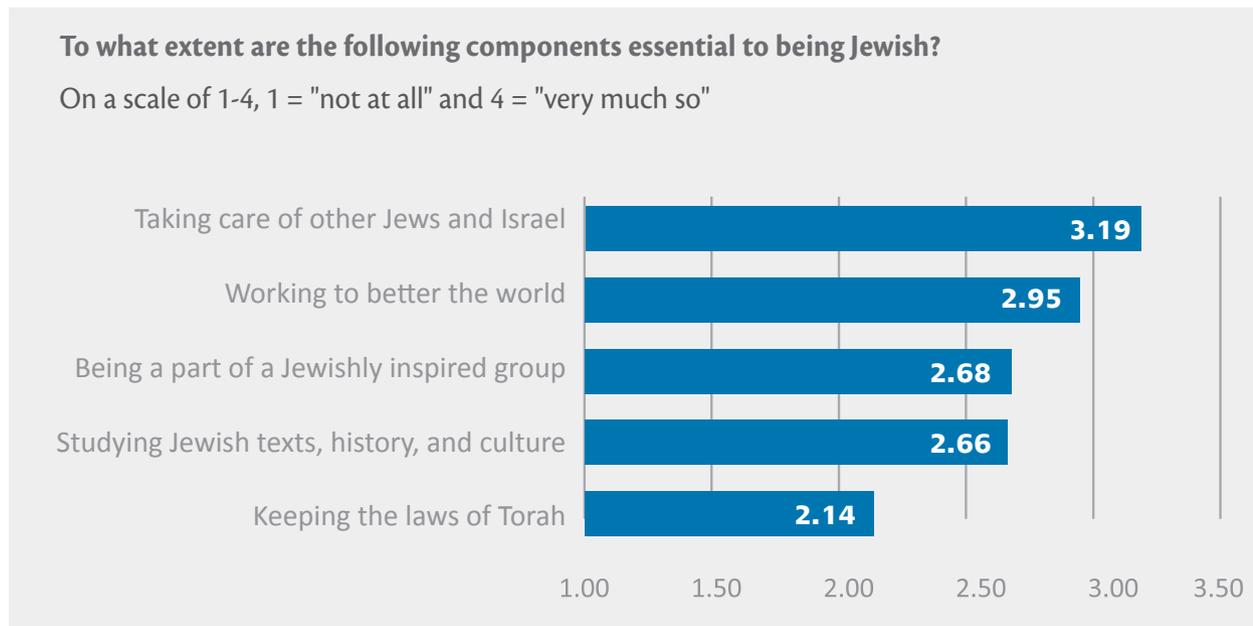
Mean response on a scale of 1-4, 1 = "not at all" and 4 = "very much so"



In addition to the relative value of four main components of Judaism, JPPI asked all Dialogue participants to identify the actions they consider “essential for being Jewish.” Five actions were offered in broad terms without elaboration. That is to say, participants were not asked about particular deeds that often appear in surveys, such as “lighting Shabbat candles” or “attending services” or “going to a Jewish day school.” They were, instead, asked to rank five broad fields of Jewish expression:

1. Keeping the laws of the Torah
2. Working to better the world
3. Studying Jewish texts, history, and culture
4. Taking care of other Jews and Israel
5. Being a part of a Jewishly inspired group

In ranking these five fields of activity, Dialogue participants gave us another layer with which to understand what Jewishness means to them. Here is how they ranked these fields and how their ranking of the five fields in this question corresponds with their ranking of the four components of Judaism in the earlier question:



The comparatively low ranking of “keeping the laws of the Torah”<sup>12</sup> (except for the Orthodox) clearly corresponds with the tendency of Jews to consider the “religious” component of Judaism as less important than other components. Interestingly, not even among the Orthodox was “keeping the laws of the Torah” overwhelmingly predominant

as an essential to being Jewish.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Orthodox respondents more highly rated “studying Jewish texts.” And their ranking of “taking care of other Jews” was even higher; more than 40 percent of them gave it the highest possible ranking.

The relatively high ranking of “taking care of other Jews and Israel” should not come as a surprise:

if Jews, as we have seen, value “nationality/peoplehood” more than “religion” (and Israeli Jews value it more than any other component of Judaism), then it follows that they would rank “taking care of Jews” above “keeping the laws of the Torah.” A Dialogue participant in Pittsburgh put it this way: “The Jews are first and foremost a people and they need to take care of whom they consider other members of the people, and this does not mean that their worry for the rest of the world is less valued. You can be a caring person, a loving person, and still care for your family more than you care for other people.”<sup>14</sup>

Caring for other people – other than Jews – is indeed important for many Jews. “Working to better the world” was the second most important Jewish activity for Dialogue participants. It was somewhat more important for Diaspora Jews than to Israelis (for Brazilians it was the most important),<sup>15</sup> as other surveys, including Pew’s two surveys of Jews in the United States and Israel, have arguably shown.

According to Pew: “U.S. Jews are more likely than Israeli Jews to say leading an ethical and moral life is essential to their Jewish identity (69 vs. 47 percent); the same is true of working for justice and equality (56 vs. 27 percent).”<sup>16</sup> Although not an exact match to JPPI’s phraseology “working to better the world,” all three correspond with the notion of Tikkun Olam familiar to most Jews. That in JPPI’s Dialogue survey “caring for other Jews and Israel” tops Tikkun Olam, even among most non-Israeli Jews, while the Pew survey shows that North-American Jews prioritize “leading a moral life” and “working for justice” over “caring about

Israel” is due to both survey language differences (caring for Jews vs. specific focus on Israel) and the differences in sample composition. Dialogue participants are much more likely to give high priority to Israel than the “average” Jew polled by Pew.<sup>17</sup>

At least for some of the Dialogue participants there was hardly any tension between the tribal notion of caring-for-Jews and the more universal caring-for-the-world notions. Participants in several Dialogue sessions explicitly expressed a desire for partnership between all Jews to “better the world” – as a participant in Washington put it: “What if instead of looking for artificial ways for connection we connect by doing Tikkun Olam together as a group?”<sup>18</sup> So for these participants what might be seen as a challenge becomes, in fact, an opportunity.

## **What are the Main Components of Jewishness? (younger vs. older)**

A lot of discussion in recent years has been dedicated to the differences between older and younger Jews on various matters, including – especially in the case of Diaspora Jewry – generational differences in reading identity issues and approaches to Israel. We also know that the composition of age groups is becoming increasingly disparate, as a result of late marriage, low birth rates, and high rates of intermarriage.

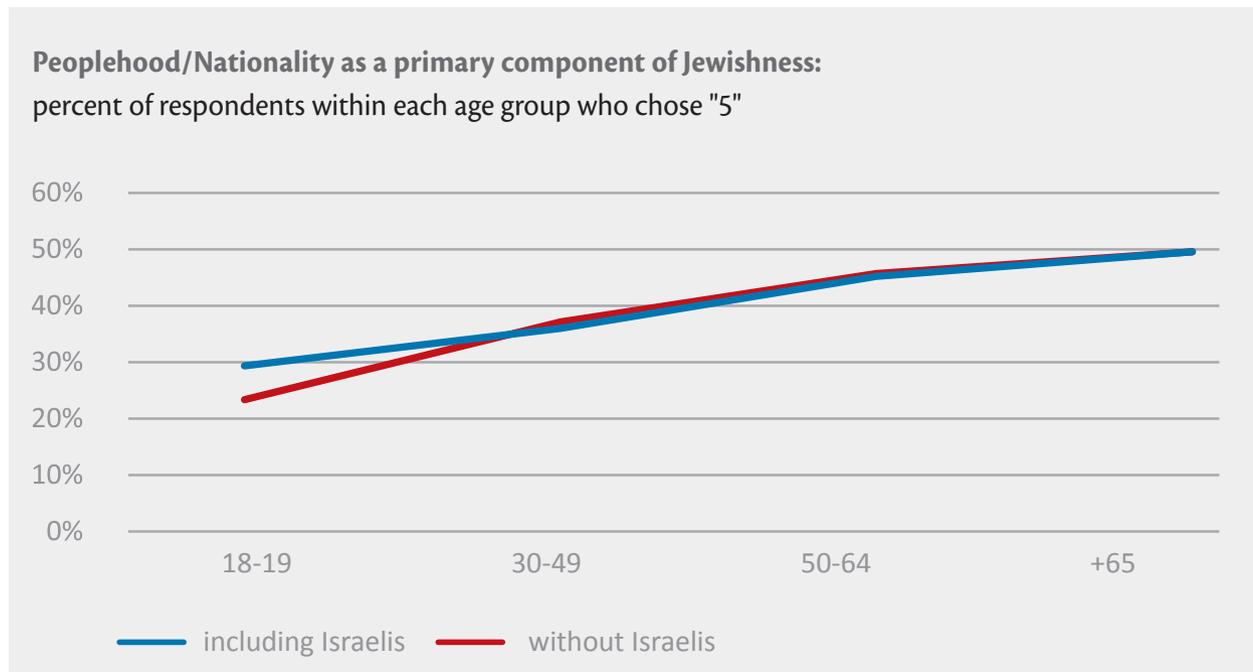
The Dialogue survey captures some of the generational differences, and, in some of the discussions we saw these differences come to life. Young participants expressed views somewhat

more radical than those of their elders, and young participants answered some of JPPI's questions markedly differently than older cohorts.

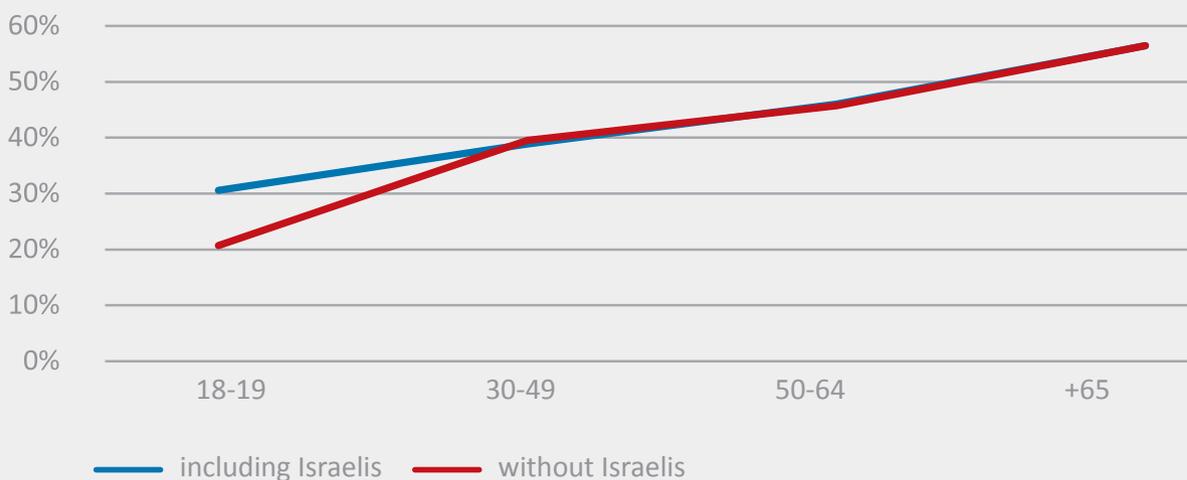
For example, as we look at the ranking of the four components of Judaism, it is clear that younger Jews – even though Dialogue participants tend to be relatively committed Jews – put slightly less emphasis on the national component of Judaism than their older colleagues. Overall, they still consider nationality and peoplehood important components of Judaism, but the younger they are, the less they consider it worthy of the highest ranking (5 on a 1-5 scale). This becomes especially pronounced when we exclude the Israeli

respondents from the survey sample, and examine the views of Diaspora Jews by age cohort:

A similar result is evident in the relative ranking of “taking care of other Jews and Israel.” As mentioned earlier, this is the Jewish activity most valued by Dialogue survey respondents. However, when examined by age cohort it is yet again clear that the younger the participant, the less his or her tendency to rank this activity highest (again, 5 on a 1-5 scale). While more than half of JPPI participants 65 years old or older ranked “taking care” as 5 – the highest possible – less than a third of the youth cohort (18-29 years old) found “taking care” worthy of a 5.



**Taking care of other Jews and of Israel is essential to being Jewish:**  
percent of respondents within each age group who chose "5"



**To summarize,** this chapter shows that for connected Jews today Judaism is viewed primarily through the lenses of culture and peoplehood, and the result is that they value the concern for other Jews more than other practical expressions of Judaism. On the other hand, we see that for younger Jews the peoplehood component is weaker than it is for older Jews (this can be a difference based on life-cycle trends or a generational shift). There are many things that Jewish institutions and the State of Israel can learn

from these trends of identification. To mention just two possible inferences: The need for Jewish communities worldwide to think creatively about ways to connect distanced Jews, and especially Jews from mixed families, who see Judaism mainly as a religion to what connected Jews view as the more central components of their Judaism – the people and the culture. There is a need for Israel to further develop a language and practice of Jewish culture that is genuinely separated from religious Orthodoxy.

## Endnotes

1 For a short discussion of the question “what is Judaism” and the ways to approach it, see: The Jews: Frequently Asked Questions, Shmuel Rosner, from page 13 (Dvir and Beit Hatfutzot, 2016, Hebrew).

2 The report Jewish Values and Israel’s Use of Force in Armed Conflict- Perspectives from World Jewry can be found here: <http://jppi.org.il/news/175/58/Jewish-Values-and-Israel-s-Use-of-Force-in-Armed-Conflict--Perspectives-from-World-Jewry/>.

3 The report Jewish and Democratic: Perspectives from World Jewry is here: [http://jppi.org.il/uploads/jewish\\_and\\_democratic-eng.pdf](http://jppi.org.il/uploads/jewish_and_democratic-eng.pdf).

4 Media reports about the 2014 dialogue can be seen here: <http://jppi.org.il/uploads/09-07-14%20Selected%20Press%20Clippings.pdf>. Reports about the 2015 dialogue, here: [http://www.timesofisrael.com/a-wartorn-israel-directly-affects-diaspora-jewry-so-where-its-voice/?fb\\_comment\\_id=915104805226877\\_915535288517162](http://www.timesofisrael.com/a-wartorn-israel-directly-affects-diaspora-jewry-so-where-its-voice/?fb_comment_id=915104805226877_915535288517162), here: <http://forward.com/opinion/317923/israeli-study-finds-jews-fretful-as-israeli-actions-stir-bias/>, and here: <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-world-news/1.667542>.

5 The survey asked respondents to rank the categories on a scale of 1-5, and all graphs showing the responses of participants are on a scale of 1-5. However, in order to compare to other surveys, all graphs showing the mean of the responses have been adapted to show the division of responses on a scale of 1-4.

6 Jews in America (and half of Israel’s Jews) tend to be more secular than members of other religions. “They are secular, in terms of their beliefs & religious participation. About as religious as non-churched Christians” (See: “Does Political Liberalism Undermine Jewish engagement? Implications for Research, Education and American Jews”, Steven Cohen, presentations to Network for Research in Jewish Education).

7 JPPI 2016 Dialogue Philadelphia seminar, April 18, 2016. Notes by Lajonel Brown.

8 See: JPPI, annual assessment 2015: [http://jppi.org.il/uploads/JPPI\\_2014-2015\\_Annual\\_Assessment\\_English-Jewish\\_People\\_Demography.pdf](http://jppi.org.il/uploads/JPPI_2014-2015_Annual_Assessment_English-Jewish_People_Demography.pdf)

9 The pluralism survey asked about religion, ancestry, nationality (but did not have peoplehood attached to it) and culture. It used a 1-4 scale rather than a 1-5 scale.

10 While the JPPI survey asked participants to rank four options, the Pew report on Israel included three options from which to choose: religion, nationality and culture. The report in English was erroneous in translating the Hebrew word that means “nationality” (in the original question in Hebrew: עניין לאומי) to “ancestry”. In this

report we refer to the question as it was asked in Hebrew. The Pew survey of Jewish Americans had religion, culture and ancestry. Thus, exact comparisons between the U.S. and Israel based on the Pew questions is impossible, even though Pew did include such comparison in the report on Israel.

11 Interestingly, the Dialogue survey shows that “non-denominational” participants ranked “religion” quite high (3.02) in comparison to the Orthodox participants (3.23). Seculars ranked religion as low as Israel’s seculars in JPPI’s Pluralism in Israel survey (2.49, 2.51).

12 The gaps between the categories are not always very wide, but this is partially a result of the way the question was framed. Each participant ranked each category on the scale, and since few participants would rank any of the components as a 1 the result is a scale in which all categories amount to something. The above Pew graph is an example of what happens when Jews are asked to choose between categories, rather than rank all categories. In such case, the gaps are much more pronounced.

13 Only about half the Orthodox ranked it a 4 or a 5 (out of 5).

14 JPPI 2016 Dialogue Pittsburgh seminar, April 4, 2016. Notes by Shmuel Rosner.

15 When comparing the percentage of participants that ranked each of the activities at 4 or 5 (on a 1-5 scale).

16 “Israel’s Religiously Divided Society”, Pew 2016, page 62.

17 The number of times non-Israeli Dialogue participants traveled to Israel compared to average Jews is telling: only 4% of JPPI Dialogue participants have not been to Israel.

18 Washington JPPI seminar, April 11, 2016. Notes by Shmuel Rosner.



# After the Zionist Revolution: Patterns of Jewish Collective Identity among Israeli Jews

## Zionism and Jewish Identity

One of the landmark events of the past year in terms of Jewish identity was the publication of the survey of the religious and political values, attitudes, and identities of the Israeli population undertaken in 2014-2015 by the Pew Research Center. The survey, "Israel's Religiously Divided Society," provides a wealth of data on Israelis of all stripes; Jewish Israelis : Haredi (ultra-Orthodox), Dati (Orthodox Religious Zionist), Masorati (traditional with selective religious observance)<sup>1</sup> and Hiloni ("secular" or non-observant), and Muslim, Christian, and Druse. But the survey's interest goes beyond the data it provides. Crucially, it was conducted by Pew, a non-Israeli agency, which, in 2012-13, conducted a similar study of American Jews and thus affords a detailed, if not simple, comparison.

The survey was conducted by the Religious Research division of the Pew Research Center and the way that the survey was published and presented to the public highlights its character as a survey of religious attitudes, beliefs and behaviors – "Israel's Religiously Divided Society." We argue though, that what the survey measures and discloses is not so much "religion" and especially not religion in the American sense of individual beliefs and practices but rather alternative frameworks of Jewish collective identity or more precisely, the effects of the adoption of different frameworks of Jewish collective identity.

One can ask two basic questions of the Pew survey data: Do Jewish Israelis share the same basic conception and pattern of Jewish identity? Secondly: Do Jewish Israelis and Diaspora Jews share the same basic conception and pattern

of Jewish identity? We shall see that the Israeli Jewish population contains two very different conceptions and patterns of Jewish identity – that of the "secular" population (Hilonim) and that of everyone else – ultra-Orthodox, Orthodox, Religious Zionist, and Traditionalist. Secondly, the secular conception of Jewish identity differs considerably from the conception of Jewish

**Hilonim, currently 49 % of the Israeli Jewish population, represent the population that actualized the Zionist Revolution, while the Haredim, currently 9%, represent the group that opposed it.**

identity expressed in the discourse of Jewish identification promoted by the organized Jewish community in the Diaspora.

The different frameworks of Jewish collective identity that the Pew data reflect are the result of the Zionist Revolution. Zionism, especially in its formative decades before the Second World War, was more than a movement to found a Jewish state (though especially from the late 1930s on that was its core component).

Rather, it was a movement to reorder Jewish life, especially its pattern of collective identity. This was particularly true of the movements that bore the brunt of Zionist realization in Palestine-Eretz Yisrael – the various Labor Zionist movements. These movements, like other branches within Zionism, attempted to replace religion as the

overarching authoritative framework of Jewish life and collective identity with a political national framework. Especially among the "secular" Zionist movements, this move was accompanied by the attempt to base Jewishness upon the "immanent frameworks" of language, political collective, and (to a certain extent) calendar, not upon religious ideals, aspirations, obligations or messianic hope.<sup>2</sup> Thus, if one lives in the State of Israel and is a Hebrew speaking citizen of it, and especially if one fulfills one's citizenship duties in terms of military service and political participation, then one's life is Jewish. One need not fill it with any further content. One might even say that for the products of the Zionist revolution being Jewish is a framework, not a set of contents. It is a matter of participation in certain – Israeli, Hebrew – frameworks and not others (French, German, Polish). This is different from the assumptions of the discourse of Jewish identification in the organized American Jewish community in which being Jewish is a set of contents – religious beliefs and practice, support for Israel, Jewish learning etc. We claim that the population group that calls itself Hiloni (generally translated as secular) is the group that carried out and underwent this revolution in the structure of Jewish collective identity.

This revolution, though, remained incomplete. Other, Haredi or ultra-Orthodox groups in the Jewish population of Palestine-Eretz Yisrael objected vociferously to this program, including the very attempt to establish a Jewish national-political framework. Other groups attempted to reinterpret Jewish nationalism and to assimilate it (in one fashion or another) into the traditional

religious framework. Thus, the Pew data presents us with four identity categories – Hilonim, ("secular" or non-observant) Masoratim ("traditionalists") Datiim and Haredim. Two of the groups represent the extremes – Hilonim and Haredim – and the other two represent the "means" or midway positions. Hilonim, who currently constitute 49 percent of the Israeli Jewish population, represent the population that actualized the Zionist Revolution, while the Haredim, currently 9 percent of the Jewish population, represent the group that opposed it. The middle groups – Datiim (13%) and Masoratim (29 percent) – represent groups who in one fashion or another reinterpret Jewish nationalism and assimilate it into the traditional-religious framework of Jewish identity. The detailed attitudes and values each group manifests, reflects the framework of Jewish collective identity they adopted. On many issues, Datiim and Masoratim side with the Haredim, but on others they are closer to the Hilonim. According to the Pew data, Jewish collective identity in Israel is dynamic; individuals may circulate among the various "stations" but the stations themselves remain stable.

## Analysis of PEW Findings

### Hilonim vs. Everybody Else

The Zionist revolutionary reordering of Jewish identity that characterizes the Hilonim, but not the other groups, is in sharp relief in the Pew survey results. Thus, in regard to the question of

the nature of Jewish identity, the Hilonim stand out in their understanding that Jewish identity is mainly a matter of national belonging and culture. Only 17 percent think that it has to do with religion at all. This is in stark contrast to all the other identity groups. Among the Haredim, 70 percent think it is solely a matter of religion and another 27 percent think it involves religion and national and cultural identity. Among the Datiim, 85 percent think it is either a matter of religion or a combination of religion and national identity; and even among Masoratim a clear majority (58 percent) think it is a matter of religion or a combination of religion and national belonging. The Hilonim also stand out dramatically in regard to how Israelis see the relationship between "Israeliness" and "Jewishness" as components of their collective identity. Again, it is only among the Hilonim that a clear majority (59 percent) see themselves as Israeli first and Jewish second. All the other groups – Haredim, Datiim and Masoratim – see themselves as Jewish first, by a large or clear majority. For Hilonim, being Israeli is the primary aspect of their collective identity, one might even say that being Israeli **is** their Jewish identity. It is important to stress that for most Hilonim being Israeli means being Jewish-Israeli. They do not include in their concept of Israeliness the Arab citizens of Israel.

**Few Israelis say they have no religion, but for Hilonim Jewish religion does not define their Jewishness**

For Hilonim, being "Jewish" in contrast refers to the traditional-Galuti-Diaspora mode of Jewish being, with which they don't identify and even reject. Hence it is secondary to their primary Jewish-Israeli identification.

However, it must be stressed that Hilonim, like all other Israeli Jews, feel Jewish pride and connection. Eighty-eight percent say they are proud to be Jewish, and 81 percent feel a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people. (Among the other groups, both Jewish pride and Jewish belonging exceed 90 percent.) Yet this sense of connection seems to be related, at least in part, to the potential of every Jew to become an Israeli. Like the other groups, 98 percent of Hilonim agree that all Jews have the right to citizenship in Israel. At the same time, they seem to be less interested and connected to these Jews in their current state. In contrast to the other identity groups, only 43 percent of Hilonim **feel a special responsibility** to take care of Jews in need (at least 60 percent of Masoratim and Datiim; and 75<sup>3</sup> percent Haredim do).

As Pew points out, few Israelis say that they have no religion (p.66). This includes Hilonim. **But the Jewish religion to which they adhere does not define their Jewishness.** Hence, it is not very important. Only 2 percent of Hilonim see religion as very important. In contrast, a vast majority of Haredim and Datiim claim that religion is very important (96 and 85 percent respectively); and among Masoratim, 83 percent think it's very or somewhat important (among Hilonim, only 19 percent think religion is somewhat important).

Not only do Hilonim think religion is not very important, only 28 percent of them think being Jewish is very important. Again, this is very different than among the other groups. Among Haredim and Datiim, over 90 percent think being Jewish is very important; 68 percent of Masoratim do. We suggest that this is the result of the fact that for Hilonim being Jewish aside from being Israeli does not carry much meaningful content, and of the "framework" nature of Jewish identity as national identity among Hilonim. Unlike in the Diaspora where Jewish identification has to be achieved (by going to synagogue, lighting Hanukkah candles, participating in a Salute to Israel Parade, etc.), being Jewish in Israel is a given by virtue of the political and linguistic framework in which one is immersed. If one were to change the framework (say by moving to New Zealand) one would change (over time) his national identity. Being Jewish for Hilonim is less a state that one strives for (and hence is "important"), and more of a given that is equivalent to other national identities that are also conferred through participation in political and linguistic frameworks. (That is, if they were in France they would be French. They happen to be in Israel so they are Jewish.)

To the extent that "being Jewish" is understood as an obligation one satisfies (and not a neutral given social fact), the one practice Hilonim do think is essential, and, hence, important to Jewishness is "remembering the Holocaust." Again, because they don't think of Jewish identification primarily as something that must be achieved, most Hilonim don't even think of living in Israel as essential to achieving Jewishness. Unlike the Datiim, of whom

54 percent answered that it is essential to being Jewish, and the Masoratim, of whom 42 percent thought so; only 23 percent of Hilonim thought that living in Israel is essential.

As we have argued, Haredim, Datiim and Masoratim did not experience the Zionist revolution at all, or did not undergo it in full, thoroughgoing manner. Hence the "syntax" they employ regarding Jewish identity is closer to the religious-traditional syntax and especially to the modern variant of the religious-traditional syntax employed in many of today's Diaspora communities (especially in the U.S.).<sup>4</sup> Hence, for all of these groups religion is a much more important component of Jewish identity than it is for Hilonim. Secondly, Israeliness is a realization of Jewishness, not a replacement or a translation of it. As a result, all these groups are Jewish first and then Israeli. Thirdly, for these groups Jewishness is an ideal and an aspiration not a neutral social fact. Hence, in order to be Jewish one has to **do** something – lead an ethical life, observe Jewish law, live in Israel, remember the Holocaust, etc. – and being Jewish is something very important. Because Hilonim largely do not think of being Jewish as an ideal or aspiration, but rather as a given within the political framework, they do not think of any of these sets of practices as essential to being Jewish (with the *pianissimo* exception of remembering the Holocaust.)

Again, the Haredim, Datiim and Masoratim did not fully undergo the Zionist revolution in Jewish collective identity. However, it is the Haredim who have explicitly rejected this reordering, and, in fact, have waged ideological war against it.

This, we think, explains Haredi "Anti-Zionism." While this is a well-known characteristic of the Haredim, we do not think that it is generally understood correctly. On one hand most Haredim are nationalistic in the sense of support for Jewish empowerment and settlement in, and control of, the Land of Israel. They have willingly participated in right-wing, nationalistic governing coalitions for the last 40 years. Nevertheless, they have historically rejected (and continue to do so) the label and the concept of "Zionism" and they reject, to one degree or another, the symbols of the state and do not participate in the rituals of its civic culture. This was evident in the Pew survey. Only a third of Haredim say that the term "Zionist" very accurately or somewhat accurately describes them (only 9 percent very accurately). In every other group at least two thirds say that the term accurately describes them.

It would seem that what the Haredim mean by the fact that they are not "Zionists" is that they emphatically reject the Zionist revolution in regard to collective identity and its ramifications. That is, they totally reject the idea that one can be Jewish simply by belonging to a Jewish political collectivity or by speaking Hebrew. (It is well to recall here the remark of R. Mordecai Alter, the Gerer Rebbe in the first half of the 20th century, concerning the *halutzim* of Kibbutz Ein Harod: "Hebrew speaking goyim.")<sup>5</sup> Thus, over 90 percent of the Haredim answered that being Jewish is mainly a matter of religion. The Religious Zionists (Datiim) and the Masoratim do not reject the Zionist label because to them "Zionism" is also a means of realizing or fulfilling the religious

dimensions of Judaism. The Haredim do not countenance such tepid latitudinarianism. Like Cardinal Newman, who claimed that there only two paths – that of the Catholic Church ("Rome") or atheism, the Haredim also basically feel that there are only two paths – that of "Torah-true Judaism" or "Zionism." Thus when Hilonim and Haredim change their group affiliation or "cross-over," they most often go from one extreme to the other. If Hilonim become religious, they most often become Haredim – not religious Zionists – and if Haredim leave their framework, for the most part, they become Hilonim.

**The vast majority of Hilonim and Haredim oppose intermarriage between the two communities**

Political and social collectivities are in part defined by how authority is distributed in them and to whom. If you define the Jewish collectivity as being political-national in nature, then political needs and goals carry the most weight and political leadership carries

the most authority. However, if you continue to define the Jewish people as a religious-traditional collectivity, then religious goals become most important and the religious leadership is the most authoritative. This issue seems to be evident in one of the questions Pew highlighted: "If there is a contradiction between democratic principles and Jewish religious law, what should take precedence?" Here again, the Haredim and the Hilonim are mirror images of each other. Eighty-nine percent of Hilonim say that democratic principles should

take precedence; the same number, 89 percent, of Haredim say that religious law should take precedence. The Hiloni position seems to reflect not only adherence to democratic principles, but also the privileging of the national-political framework over the religious one. The Haredim, in contrast, insist that the overarching framework of the Jewish people remains a religious-traditional one, hence the Halacha takes precedence.

The mutually exclusive polar opposite natures of the Haredim and Hilonim is also expressed in their social relations. The vast majority of both Haredim and Hilonim opposes intermarriage between their two communities. Ninety-five percent of Haredim say that they would be "not too," or "not at all" comfortable if their child married a Hiloni, and 93 percent of Hilonim say the same with respect to the Haredim. Hilonim are more uncomfortable with the prospect of their children marrying Haredim than with the prospect of their children marrying Christians.

Israeli Hilonim are not really opposed to religion, they just don't want it to define what being Jewish is, and they don't want it or its representatives to be the decisive authority in Jewish life. Thus many Hilonim observe some religious practices and to one degree or another hold religious beliefs, and they do so to an extent that is higher than that of non-Orthodox Jews in America. Thus, a third (33 percent) of Hilonim keep kosher (22 percent of all American Jews keep kosher, 7 percent of Reform Jews. Eighty-seven percent of Hilonim attend a Passover Seder of some sort, which is much higher than for the American Jewish population (70 percent); 67 percent do not eat pork; 80 percent

light Hanukkah candles; 30 percent fast on Yom Kippur; and 60 percent, to one degree or another, believe in God.

At the same time, they are emphatically opposed to religion being an authoritative structure and hence they are also distanced from, or opposed to, the institutional aspect of religion. Eighty-eight percent say that religion should be kept separate from government policies (80 percent or more of Datiim and Haredim believe that government policies should promote religious values and beliefs), and 60 percent never attend synagogue. Again, for Hilonim being Jewish is something that emerges from the immanent political and linguistic frameworks; hence 44 percent think that Jewish education, that is, education that teaches specific Jewish content, is not important.

While Hilonim in some fashion keep some traditional religious practices and beliefs, their attitudes are clearly differentiated from that of self-identified Israeli traditionalist Jews (Masoratim). Israeli traditionalist Jews (who are not strictly observant), in regard to many questions, hold attitudes that are midway between those of religious Orthodox Jews (Haredim and Datiim) and Hilonim, and tend more to endorse traditional authority and gender roles. Thus, 44 percent of Masoratim support shutting down public transportation on Shabbat, while only 6 percent of Hilonim do (among Datiim and Haredim, at least 85 percent do). And 70 percent of Masoratim oppose allowing Reform and Conservative rabbis to perform marriages, whereas only 28 percent of Hilonim oppose this. Furthermore, 58 percent of Masoratim believe that government policies

should promote religious values and beliefs, a position that only 8 percent of Hilonim endorse. In other words, Hilonim and Masoratim are two very different groups whose behavior may overlap here and there, but represent two different underlying worldviews regarding the nature of the Jewish people and its framework of authority. The Hilonim have undergone the Zionist revolution, while the Masoratim may be considered the "left wing" of those who have not, and even objected to it.

The Hilonim also have distinctive political views. In regard to many political and constitutional issues they stand opposed to the other three groups and they are the only group that contains a subgroup that defines itself as being "left." It is also the only group that contains subgroups that support "leftist" or more universalist political positions. Thus, in regard to the question that made headlines – "Do you agree or disagree with the statement 'Arabs should be expelled or transferred from Israel,'" 58 percent of Hilonim **disagreed**. Among all the other groups a majority agreed. Again, a slim majority of Hilonim (56 percent) agreed that a peaceful two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict is possible. Among all the other groups, a majority disagreed. Furthermore, Hilonim are the only group with a substantial number of members willing to self-identify as "Left" – 14 percent. Among the other groups the number was

**58% of Masoratim believe that the government should promote religious values, versus only 8% of Hilonim**

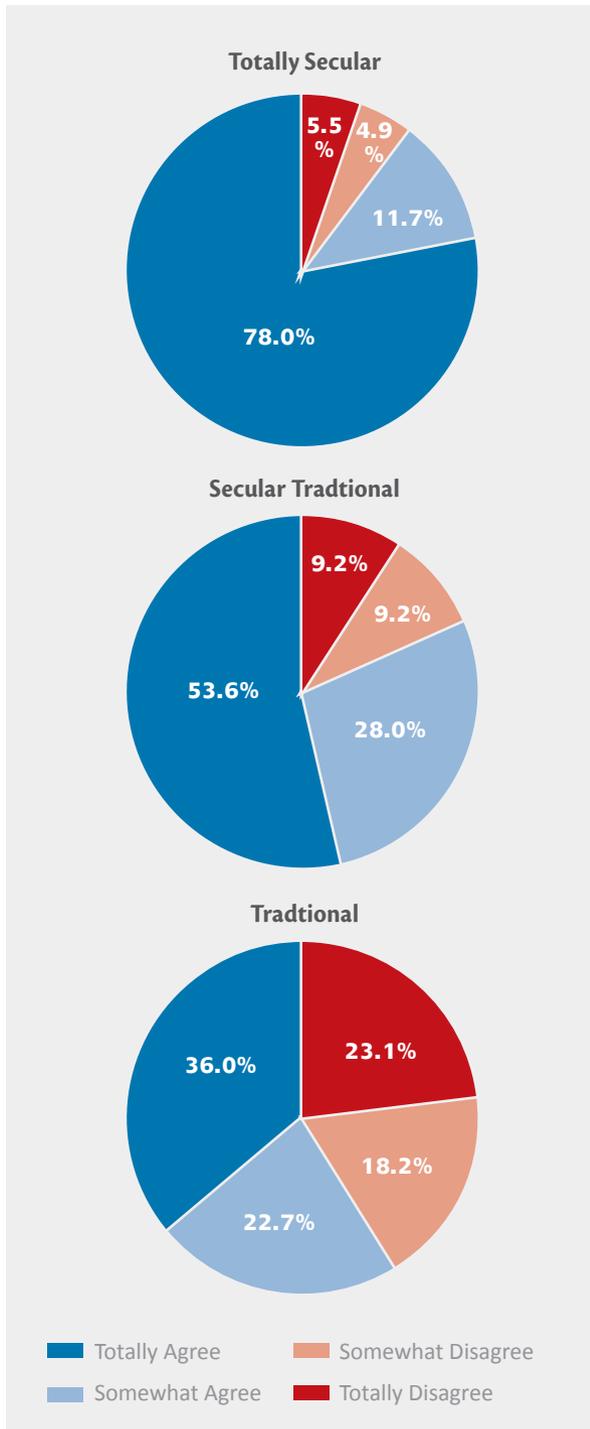
negligible (1-3 percent). We get a sort of mirror image when we look at people who identify as “right”: Among Haredim, Datiim, and Masoratim, about half the population identified as right; the other half, center. Among Hilonim only 24 percent identified as right and 62 percent identified as center. We have seen above that 89 percent of Hilonim agree that democratic principles should be given preference if there is a contradiction between them and the Jewish religious law.

Interpreting this, it would seem that Hilonim have a greater tendency to adopt universalist (as opposed to particularist) orientations. Following the implications of the Zionist Revolution in regard to collective identity, they tend not to believe that there is a deep (ontological or other) difference between Jews and non-Jews. What makes people Jewish is their participation in a Jewish political and linguistic framework. Such frameworks are not, in principle, different from similar frameworks among non-Jews. This orientation may be partially responsible for the high rates of assimilation and intermarriage among Israeli Jews when they go abroad. Nevertheless, there are limits to universalism among Hilonim. Sixty-nine percent think that Jews should be given preferential treatment in the State of Israel. It would seem that some of this is due to their understanding of Israel as a Jewish state, which should promote Jewish interests.

## **“Absolute Hilonim” and “Somewhat Traditional Hilonim”**

The Pew study only employs one single category – “Hilonim,” so it is difficult to know whether they constitute an undifferentiated category or whether there are differences between Hilonim who observe more or fewer religious practices. The Jewish People Policy Institute Israeli Pluralism Survey, though, created two categories in regard to Hilonim: “Absolute Hilonim” who constitute 30.4 percent of the sample, and “Somewhat Traditional Hilonim” who constitute 20.8 percent. The two groups together make up 51 percent of the sample, which is close to the size of the Hiloni group the Pew Study found (49 percent). It stands to reason that many or most of the Hilonim who observe religious practices such as lighting Shabbat Candles or keeping Kosher in the Pew study would belong to the Somewhat Traditional Hilonim group in the JPPI survey. The JPPI survey also contained a significant number of attitude questions; it turns out that the Somewhat Traditional Hilonim were a bit more conservative-traditional in their answers than the Absolute Hilonim. At the same time, in a manner that is congruent with the Pew study, in the JPPI, Survey the Somewhat Traditional Hilonim are also differentiated from the Masoratim group. The former being more liberal-secular than the latter. Thus, the three groups form something of a continuum moving from right to left – Masoratim are the most conservative-traditional, then comes the Somewhat Traditional Hilonim, and finally the most secular-liberal are the Absolute Hilonim. The groups also differ in their demographic characteristics. Forty-five percent of the

## Civil marriage should be allowed in Israel



Masoratim are from the Middle East and North Africa (Mizrachim), double their size in the sample as a whole. At the same time, immigrants from the FSU make up 21.7 percent of the Absolute Hilonim. This percentage is 75 percent larger than their size in the sample as a whole.

The attitudes of the three groups in relation to nine attitude questions are presented in the following pie charts.

These pie charts show that the Somewhat Traditional Hilonim hold positions that are between those of the Masoratim and the Absolute Hilonim. Yet they also show that the Somewhat Traditional Hilonim basically hold policy positions that are similar to those of the Absolute Hilonim, albeit with somewhat less conviction or greater ambivalence. Thus, in regard to civil marriage, over three quarters of the Absolute Hilonim fully agree that civil marriage should be possible in Israel. Together with those that somewhat agree that civil marriage should be introduced, those that support civil marriage constitute almost seven eighths of the Absolute Hilonim group. A similar number of support for civil marriage is reached for Somewhat Traditional Hilonim if you add together those who "fully agree" that civil marriage should be introduced with those who "somewhat agree." In that case, a bit over three quarters support civil marriage. In contrast, among Masoratim, even if you add "fully agree" and "somewhat agree," less than three quarters support civil marriage, and less than half fully agree that it should be instituted.

The situation is similar in regard to the question whether one would want non-Jewish children

to attend his or her children's school. Among Absolute Hilonim, almost half fully agreed and almost three quarters either fully or somewhat agreed. Among Somewhat Traditional Hilonim, less than half fully agreed but about five in eight fully or somewhat agreed, again a percentage that is close to that of the Absolute Hilonim, but with less conviction. Among Masoratim, less than a quarter fully agreed, and less than half fully or somewhat agreed.

## Integration among Israeli Jews

**On many levels, Masoratim are a sort of bridge between Jewish population groups in Israel.**

According to the Pew Report Hilonim are about half (49 percent) of the Jewish population of Israel. We have seen that in fundamental ways, their worldview, especially regarding the Jewish people and

religion, culture, and tradition differs from the more traditionally oriented population sectors. They are also prominently (some would say, hegemonically) represented among Israeli elites and in the reality-defining professions of media, law, arts, and academics. Such a population profile is indeed behind the cultural and political "wars" that characterize Israeli society.

Yet, the Israeli Jewish population also contains mechanisms of integration. One very important factor in this regard is the Masorati population. While the Masorati population resembles the Dati and Haredi populations in terms of basic

worldview, they very much overlap with Hilonim when it comes to behavior. Like the Hilonim, they are not strictly observant religiously and participate in leisure activities on Shabbat, such as going to the beach and attending soccer games. In their norms of dress and mixing of the sexes they also resemble Hilonim. Furthermore, in some of their attitudes, especially those related to their own personal freedom, they are closer to Hilonim than to the strictly religious groups. Thus, 79 percent oppose gender segregation on public transportation used by Haredim (93 percent of Hilonim oppose it), and 57 percent oppose, and only 37 percent of Masoratim support, Halacha becoming the law of the land. In other words, on many levels the Masoratim are a sort of bridge between Jewish population groups in Israel. Furthermore, the fact that the Hilonim are divided into "Absolute Hilonim" and "Somewhat Traditional Hilonim" also means, that to a certain extent, Israeli society is not characterized solely by a dichotomy of the Hilonim vs. everyone else, but by a continuous spectrum. Religious gradually shades off into secular. To the left of the Orthodox stand the Masoratim, who as we have seen, are still rather conservative and traditional. Next to them are the "Somewhat Traditional Hilonim" who are less traditional and more pluralistic. At the end of the spectrum we have the Absolute Hilonim who are maximally pluralistic and not traditional.

Another integrating factor is the mobility between the various groups, especially the two middle groups: Datiim and Masoratim. About 9 percent of those raised Dati or Masorati no longer belong to those groups (There has been relatively little

switching out of the Haredi camp). The Datiim have gained 2 percent of their numbers from other groups and the Masoratim have gained 10 percent. Four percent of those raised Hilonim are no longer so, but 8 percent of their numbers are new arrivals. Thus, it would seem that Datiim become Masoratim and Masoratim become Hilonim: The 9% of those raised as Masoratim who have left were replaced by Datiim who became Masoratiim. That group that left the Masorati camp largely became Hilonim. The fact that Israeli Jews in the course of their lives are “religiously mobile” is an integrating factor promoting understanding between the groups and maintaining social connections.

## Israeli Jews and American Jews

This identity profile of the Israeli Jewish population can illuminate the relations between American and Israeli Jews. On one hand, the population group that most closely resembles the majority American Jewish population in terms of lifestyle, income, social class, educational attainment, occupational status, and political orientation – the Hilonim – has very different assumptions about Jewish identity from the organized American Jewish community. In contrast, there are other groups whose assumptions concerning Jewish identity resemble those of the organized American Jewish community – the Masoratim, Datiim and Haredim. Like the organized American Jewish community, these groups think of Jewish identity as being constituted by content, and its realization involves doing or achieving something (saying Psalms, praying, going on a pilgrimage to

a Holy site or individual, supporting settlement in the Greater Land of Israel, studying Torah or Jewish sources). However, these groups are, for the most part, **very different** from the American Jews who make up the majority of the American organized Jewish community in terms of life style and political orientation and to a certain extent also in income and social class, educational attainment and occupational status

The organized American Jewish community is bothered by the fact that the Israeli Jews with whom they have the most contact and most in common, do not seem to be concerned with Jewish identity in the same way they are. Thus, they fund a plethora of programs that promote Jewish identity and the teaching of the “Jewish bookshelf” to secular Israelis in Israel. While these programs are interesting and attractive, they are mainly today marginal to Israeli life and culture. In order for these programs to have more effect they should engage secular Israelis and the creators and American sponsors of these programs in dialogue concerning the different meanings and assumptions of Jewish identity.

**The organized American Jewish community and Israeli Hilonim do not seem to be concerned with Jewish identity in the same way**

## Endnotes

1 Not to be confused with the Masorati movement which is the Israeli name for the American Conservative movement. We are not speaking about American Conservative Jews but of Israeli Jews mainly of North African and the Middle Eastern origin who selectively observe the religious tradition and have a religious outlook and belief system.

2 David Ohana, "The Secular Viewpoint of Menahem Brinker," Haaretz, March 4, 2016 . Brinker's recently published book, Hebrew Literature as European Literature and the discussion that it generated informs the analysis of Hilonim presented here.

3 It is likely that Haredim have a somewhat different understanding of "Jews in need" than other Jews and of the aid that they require.

4 Pre-Modern Jewish identity for the most part regarded Jewishness as both something given (ascribed) and as something achieved.

5. "גויים ואס רעדען העברייאיש".

## Religious Zionism in Israel Today: Toward the Center

One ongoing topic of political and social discussion in Israel today is the changing character of leadership, or of the "elites." This change is thought to occur in regard to both the governing elites and the leadership in other crucial spheres, such as the military and the media. To the extent that this change is occurring it is consequential because it will be bound up with changes in policy, and in behavior and substance. In this chapter we will focus upon one population sector involved in these processes – the Religious Zionist sector\*. This sector, for the most part, carries its own approach to Zionism and Jewish nationalism, and, as we shall see, is eager to exercise moral and political influence and leadership.

As commonly defined, the Religious Zionist community constitutes about 10-12 percent of the population<sup>1</sup>, however, according to a recent survey, this community comprises about one fifth of the Jewish population.<sup>2</sup>

Despite its small size, the Religious Zionist

community has an outsized impact on Israeli public life. It has spearheaded the movement to settle Judea and Samaria (that is, the occupied territories of the West Bank), and today its members make up a very sizable portion of the IDF's officer corps (in combat units they make up over a third of the officers). Moreover, in the current government they control three ministries, two of which have an important impact on general Israeli public life – the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice. Just as important, for the first time in the history of the state, three of the most senior positions in the security and defense establishment – Head of the Mossad, Head of General Security Service (Shin Bet), and Chief of Police are held by people who were raised in the Religious Zionist community.

Religious Zionism arose and developed as an attempt to integrate Orthodox Judaism and modern nationalism. Within this framework, Religious Zionists view the flourishing of the Jewish

people, the State of Israel, and the control and settlement of the Land of Israel as essential parts of the religious way of life they are committed to.

The first development is the increased crystallization of the drive to have an impact upon, and even lead, the political, cultural, and moral life of Israel. Religious Zionism constitutes an alternative, integral formulation of Jewish nationalism, which is different from, and even opposed to, liberal formulations insofar as it tends to give priority to collective belonging and collective goals over individual goals, needs, and ambitions. Religious Zionist moral and political leadership would aim to strengthen the Jewish nationalist character of the State of Israel and its attachment to the Greater Land of Israel. Currently, the Religious Zionist community aims to exercise this leadership through its prominence in the military, through its control of the Education and Justice Ministries and the policies and legislation they initiate and implement, and through grass roots efforts at education and local communal leadership.

In addition to the attempt at leadership implemented through the Jewish Home Party and organizations fully identified with the Religious Zionist sector, the Religious Zionist public also attempts to exercise leadership through the ruling Likud Party.

A second development is that there has been a reduction in religiosity among part of the Religious Zionist public. While this development has only fully affected part of the community, it has had a good deal of public visibility and discussion. It is

noteworthy because it partially reverses the trend that has characterized Religious Zionism for the past generation or so.

As Religious Zionism presents a public image that is less sectarian and stringently religious, its integral nationalist agenda and nationalist leadership can become more generally acceptable. This trend also finds expression in the attempt to appoint non-observant representatives of the Jewish Home Party to the Knesset and the Government.

## **Part I - The Drive Toward Political and Moral Leadership**

The drive toward moral and political leadership is a long-term trend in Religious Zionism and essentially grows out of the fundamental identity dilemma that characterizes this sector. This dilemma derives from the confrontation of traditional Orthodox Jews with modern Jewish nationalism as the organizing principle of Jewish life. Those groups that carried the Jewish religion as the organizing principle of Jewish life can react to this challenge in one of the following ways:

One can oppose and reject modern Jewish nationalism.

One can assign to it a limited instrumental meaning and thereby attempt to enable it to coexist with traditional Judaism.

One can attempt to effect an integration and unification of religion and modern nationalism. It should be stressed that this is not a return to the traditional conflation of religion and peoplehood (though its proponents sometimes want to

present it as such), but an attempt to integrate religion with the ideas of modern nationalism and its institutional structures such as the modern nation-state.

**The response of Religious Zionism has been to integrate and unify traditional Orthodox Judaism with modern nationalism. This attempt at integration has been gradual and long term.** In the first stage, the Religious Zionist implemented the unification of religion and nationalism at the local and communal level – especially in Religious Zionist *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*. It was only in the late 1950s that they started to think about implementing it on the state-wide political level as well, with the emergence of “the generation of the state,” who were organized into the Young Mizrahi Faction within the National Religious Party. This generation was socialized after the creation of the state in 1948 with the state educational system and the IDF playing decisive roles. In the late 1950s, the Young Mizrahi faction began to think about Religious Zionism not as minor partner to Mapai, which politically and ideologically led the Israeli state and society, but as an alternative to Mapai (or part of an alternative) with a different political and ideological vision, one that married religion and nationalism.<sup>3</sup> The contemporary Jewish Home Party and its leadership continue this attempt to unify religion and nationalism.

This association with nationalism has resulted in a transformed Jewish theology. At the center of this theology stands the ascription of religious meaning to material, secular, pursuits and activities. Especially those constitutive of nation-

building, such as politics, settlement, defense and economic and cultural production.<sup>4</sup>

The most definitive expression, of this initial drive to morally and politically lead the entire state of Israel was the project of the incorporation and settlement of the Greater Land of Israel. Though the Religious Zionist community provided the most active elements in this project and elaborated its ideological formulation, it did not conceive of it as a project of the Religious Zionist sector alone. On the contrary, they conceived of it as expressing the inner, general will of the entire nation. With the accession of the Likud government in 1977, the settlement of the Greater Land of Israel became official government policy.

## **The Disengagement from Gaza and the Face-to-Face Project**

Despite this ambition to influence national life and policy, and to exercise moral and political leadership, the National Religious sector was also characterized by other, contrasting tendencies. These tendencies, which attracted a great deal of media and academic attention, consisted of strengthening the religious commitments and behaviors of the Religious Zionist public and adopting a more secluded and sectarian lifestyle. These behaviors stemmed from an outlook that was basically dialectical: The more the Religious Zionist public purified itself in terms of its religious national lifestyle, the more salutary would its impact be on the general Israeli public. Ultimately, it envisioned a higher synthesis of religion and nationalism in which both the religious and

national components would be strong. Nevertheless, in day-to-day life, some members of Religious Zionist community participated in a life style that was removed from the general Jewish-Israeli one, including living in exclusively national religious settlements and neighborhoods and enrolling their children in the separate National Religious educational system.

Members of the national religious public began to question this approach in the 1990s with the advent of the Oslo Accords, and, more generally, the rise and strengthening of the "liberal citizenship discourse"

**The contemporary Jewish Home Party and its leadership continue the attempt to unify religion and nationalism**

– and even more so in the wake of the Gaza disengagement. This new turn was signaled by a famous article by R. Yoel Bin-Nun, entitled "We Have not Succeeded in Settling in the Hearts."<sup>5</sup> Bin-Nun argued that even though the West Bank settlement enterprise

was a success in terms of "facts on the ground" – settlements and houses built, the Religious Zionist public had not succeeded in properly explaining itself and its ideology to the general Israeli public and winning them over. The Religious Zionist community thus embarked upon and strengthened initiatives that would bring their message to the broader Israeli public, especially the public living in the secular Israeli "heartland," of Tel Aviv and Gush Dan. Thus, it dispatched groups (*garinim* – seeds) to do ideological and educational work in Israeli cities. There are about 60 *garinim* operating today.

The fact that the Religious Zionist public found itself basically alone in its struggle against the government ordered dismantling of 17 settlements and the evacuation of more than 8500 people in the 2005 disengagement from Gaza very much reinforced the idea that its settlement policy and outlook had not "settled in the hearts" of the Israeli public. Thus, in the wake of the disengagement the idea of becoming more engaged with general Israeli society, more part of it, gained momentum. One aspect of this is gradual trend of integration into, and participation in, Israeli electronic media and arts. Along with the attempt to have a direct impact, Religious Zionists felt that if the general Israeli body politic accepted the Religious Zionist public as a legitimate part of itself, it would be more open to its concerns and interests.

## **Integral Nationalism**

The mainstream of Religious Zionist thought today views the goal of the return to Zion and the establishment of the Jewish state not primarily as a response to anti-Semitism and persecution but as the realization of religious and divine ideals. Furthermore, it is the vocation of the Jewish state to realize divine ideals in its institutions and public life. Ultimately, Religious Zionists believe this realization will have both a utopian and restorative character (e.g. the rebuilding of the Temple). These utopian and restorative aspirations give contemporary Religious Zionism its "messianic" or redemptive character. The national restoration of the Jewish people as well as the political incorporation and settlement of the

Greater Land of Israel are intrinsic and important parts of this redemptive realization of divine ideals. In this context, Religious Zionists regard the Jewish nation and the Land of Israel as organic entities with a corporate life of their own, and not as aggregations of contracting individuals or infinitely dividable fragments of land.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, the vast majority of Religious Zionists are not theologians. Nevertheless, these underlying theological premises inform their thought on more mundane issues, especially those that concern national identity, citizenship, minority rights, democracy, and politics. As it conceives of the nation in organic, corporatist terms, it demands that the individual identify with the national collective and put him/herself at its service. Contemporary Religious Zionism does support democracy in the sense of a government that expresses the will of the people, and is based upon its consent. However, the "people" does not consist of atomistic individuals who through the social contract form a political body, but rather of the corporate nation of Israel, which is a historical, cultural, religious and even metaphysical entity.<sup>7</sup> According to the regnant Religious Zionist ideology, the true inner will of the nation is in fact the will of God. From these basic, theological, ideological and political premises, Religious Zionists and their representatives tend to formulate their stands on practical, concrete, and quotidian public and political issues.

## The Historical Antecedents for the Contemporary Jewish Home Party

The Jewish Home party differs from its immediate ancestor, the National Religious Party (NRP), in that it includes avowedly secular members in its leadership. The number two person in the party, Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked, is a secular woman. Yinon Magal, a secular journalist, represented the party as a Knesset member (until his resignation in December 2015). Although these secular representatives probably do not fully subscribe to the theological assumptions described above, they do affirm the nationalist outlook of the party and the notion of the Jewish people as a historical nation with historical claims on the Greater Land of Israel. They also tend to emphasize the Jewish identity of the State of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people.

This is not the first time Religious Zionist leadership has joined forces with secular rightwing elements. In 1979, Geula Cohen and Moshe Shamir founded the Techiyya (Renaissance) party which combined Religious Zionists, such as Hanan Porat and R. Eliezer Waldman, with rightwing secular leaders, such as Ms. Cohen and Prof. Yuval Neeman. This

**Unlike its immediate ancestor, the Jewish Home Party includes avowedly secular members in its leadership**

partnership between extremely Orthodox rightwing figures and rightwing secular leaders continued in the successor to the Techiyya party – The National Unity list that included R. Benny Alon (on the Religious Zionist side) and Dr. Aryeh Eldad (on the secular nationalist side).

Thus, in order to fully understand the contemporary Jewish Home Party we should compare it to both of its predecessors. The NRP viewed itself, in large part, as a sectorial party. In addition to securing the settlement of the Greater Land of Israel it also sought to obtain funds and other resources for the ongoing special needs of the Orthodox Religious Zionist community – schools, synagogues, ritual baths etc. In contrast to this, the Techiya/National Unity Party tended to want to give pure expression to the general will (*volonté générale*) in regard to the incorporation of the Greater Land of Israel.

In contrast to both its predecessors, the Bennett/Shaked wing of the Jewish Home Party tends to present a much more comprehensive integral nationalist agenda – touching upon citizenship and civics education, the national identity of the state and civil society. Furthermore, unlike the rabbis who headed Techiya, they tend to portray themselves as being much more "with it" and in touch with contemporary Israeli culture. Bennett stresses in his self-presentation his background as a successful hi-tech entrepreneur, and Shaked presents herself as a young and stylish Tel Aviv woman (as does Bennett's wife, Gilat, though she is more suburban).<sup>8</sup> Their message is that their integral nationalist approach is a relevant alternative for contemporary Israeli society

and goes well with contemporary capitalist and consumerist culture.

## Religious Zionists in the Likud

Religious Zionist political leadership is not confined to the Jewish Home Party. Several of the more prominent Likud leaders are Religious Zionists and promote a Religious Zionist agenda. This identification has been reciprocated by the Religious Zionist voting public. In the last elections, held in March 2014, four parliamentary mandates moved from the Jewish Home Party to the Likud.

While the Likud always contained Orthodox members, in the last 20 or so years, self-conscious Religious Zionists started to join Likud with the explicit purpose of influencing (and even taking control of) its ideology and policy. The first, vanguard example of this was Moshe Faiglin, a far right settlement activist. Although Faiglin was elected as a Likud MK, his challenges to Netanyahu for the leadership of the party were successively defeated.

Despite Faiglin's defeat and eventual departure, the idea of joining and influencing Likud began to take hold in the settlements, and substantial numbers of settlers joined the party. While many of these new members did not, at first, vote for Likud,<sup>9</sup> the increased Religious Zionist presence made itself felt among the leadership. Thus, one Likud minister, and an important member of its leadership, Ze'ev Elkin (Minister of Jerusalem and Heritage) is an avowed Religious Zionist and settler; the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Tzipi Hotovely is also a Religious Zionist, as is the Knesset's Speaker, Yuli Edelstein. Some of the people closest to Prime Minister Netanyahu are also Religious Zionists, namely Natan Eshel, Rami Sadan, and Shlomo Filber. The latter two hold important bureaucratic positions – Chairman of the News Corporation of Channel 10 and Director General of the Communications Ministry. In the last election, Filber and Hotovely were in charge of the Likud election headquarters in Judea and Samaria.

At the same time that Religious Zionists gained prominence in Likud, Likud leaders who were identified as secular and liberal were removed from leadership positions, and even from the party. These include the President of the State of Israel, Ruvi Rivlin (who was elected President against the will of Prime Minister Netanyahu), Dan Meridor, and Michael Eitan. The prominence of Religious Zionists in the current government, and in Likud, points to the fact that more than any previous government, the current government does not give pride of place to secular figures, but rather to those groups that did not fully accept the change in Jewish identity the Zionist revolution attempted to effect.<sup>10</sup> These include Haredim, National Religious, and Masorati elements (such as Minister of Culture and Sport Miri Regev).<sup>11</sup>

## **Jewish Home control of the Ministries of Education and Justice**

Since the last election (16 months or so), Jewish Home Party Ministers Bennett and Shaked together with Ze'ev Elkin from Likud have implemented new initiatives and programs designed to strengthen the Jewish nationalist character of the Israeli society. Bennett has enacted changes in two main areas. The first is "Israeli-Jewish Culture." Here Bennett built upon a long-standing tendency, especially in the general state schools, to provide some Jewish identity education. He expanded the Israeli-Jewish Culture program to include all grades from first through ninth. The introduction to the curriculum includes the following:

"The curriculum in Israeli-Jewish Culture aims to strengthen and deepen the Jewish-Zionist-Israeli identity of the pupils in the general state education system, their sense of belonging, responsibility, and commitment to their people, their heritage and their culture."<sup>12</sup> Consistent with Bennett's ideology of integral nationalism, this sentence stresses the commitment and responsibility that individuals have to the Jewish people and its culture.

The other field in which Bennett advanced a more nationalist agenda is that of civics education. Here, Bennett and the bureaucrats under him reshaped the civics curriculum and textbook to give them a more nationalist and collectivist orientation,<sup>13</sup> and to minimize the more individualist and liberal construction of citizenship with its emphasis upon human and civil rights.

The Justice Ministry under Ayelet Shaked of the Jewish Home Party is also advancing legislation of a similarly nationalist character. She is advancing the new NGO law which requires that NGOs that receive more than half their funding from foreign sources to disclose so in all their public communications. In the vast majority of cases this law would affect NGOs that advocate for civil rights, especially for the Palestinian population, and oppose the Israeli occupation of Judea and Samaria. Minister Shaked has also gone on record that the Supreme Court in implementing its doctrine of judicial review has

**Despite Faiglin's defeat, the idea of joining and influencing Likud took hold in the settlements**

arrogated to itself undue powers. Accordingly, she has tabled legislation that anchors the Supreme Court's power of judicial review in law and provides a mechanism whereby a special majority in the Knesset can override the Court's decision to cancel a law. One of the

commonplaces of religious and rightwing political discourse in Israel is that the Court, in its zeal to protect minorities and the rights of the Palestinians, works against the well-being of the Jewish people and the Jewish majority.

In addition to being Minister of Education, Naftali Bennett is also Minister of Diaspora Affairs. The ministry has recently announced the funding of programs promoting Jewish identity and support for Israel on American college campuses. The Ministry awarded the funding to two Orthodox groups and to the Hillel Foundation.<sup>14</sup>

## Religious Zionists in the Army

Since the late 1980s, Religious Zionists have joined elite IDF special forces units and have become officers in combat units in significant numbers. Currently, well over one third of the junior officers in these units are Religious Zionists, as are approximately 50 percent of the candidates in the combat officer training course. This is particularly true in the ground forces. Increasing numbers of Religious Zionist officers are entering the upper echelons of command, becoming commanders of combat regiments and brigades. This is in contrast to the situation that obtained before the late 1980s when the IDF's entire high command and its elite combat units were almost entirely composed of secular troops<sup>15</sup>.

One of the reasons for this development is that the previous reservoir of manpower for elite and combat positions in the IDF – the secular (mainly Ashkenazic) middle class – has in recent years provided less manpower than it had previously. The explanations for this are many and complex, but one central reason is the cultural and social change that has come over a good part of Israeli society, especially the secular middle class. This sector of society has moved from what Shafir and Peled called a "republican citizenship discourse" in which contribution to the common good earned one high status and social and material rewards to a "liberal citizenship discourse." In the latter, individuals are encouraged to achieve rewards and benefits individualistically, through competition in the economic and other marketplaces. Accordingly, military service and officership in

combat units has become somewhat devalued for this population<sup>16</sup>.

Thus, the army was willing to have other high quality population groups fill the vacuum. The group that did in fact fill this vacuum were the Religious Zionists. In order to do this they developed a new organizational form – the *mechina* or pre-Army preparatory program. The *mechina* was designed to allow Religious Zionist youth (first and mainly males) to take leadership and elite roles while remaining loyal Orthodox Jews and dedicated to the Religious Zionist nationalist ideology. Thus, the *mechina* program enables the Religious Zionist sector to influence first the military and ultimately Israeli society as a whole.

In the *mechina* program, unlike the Hesder Yeshiva, students study for one or two years and then complete full mandatory military service of three years or more. Unlike the Hesder program, the *mechina* curriculum does not place heavy emphasis on Talmud. Rather, the emphasis is on National Religious ideology and theology (mainly the writings of Rabbi A.I. Kook and his school), Bible, and Halacha. The avowed aim is not to prepare *Talmidei Chachamim* but rather to prepare young men for leadership positions in the army and in society. Most of the graduates are encouraged to enlist in elite units and to enter officer training courses. The *mechina* is part of the attempt to bring worldly national life (i.e. the military) under religious regulation, and thus imbue it with religious and Divine ideals. In 2013 there were about 1,400 young people in 21 Religious Zionist *mechina* programs<sup>17</sup>.

To one extent or another, this program of imbuing the IDF with religious ideals seems to be succeeding. There seems to be a gradual process whereby the place and the weight of (Jewish Orthodox) religion and religious authorities appears to be increasing. Observers (including very critical ones) have shown: 1) how the Jewish religion gradually defines the collective identity of the army; 2) how orders and instructions are gradually being made to fit religious requirements vis-a-vis troop deployment in the occupied territories, the place of women, and behavior on the Sabbath; 3) Religious authorities gradually play a role, alongside the formal commanders, in shaping and regulating the army's actions and undertakings<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, until recently, troops were also exposed to religious education and socialization including with respect to military ethics and rules of engagement.

**Under the current leadership of Eizenkot, the high command of the IDF is attempting to curtail religious influence**

It would seem that the current high command under the leadership of Leut. General Eizenkot is attempting to curtail, to some extent, religious influence in the military. Chief of Staff Eisenkott removed the Jewish Identity Unit from the Army Rabbinate in January 2016. He also appointed a Chief Army Rabbi, Brigadier Gen. Rabbi Eyal Krim, who made it clear that he would adhere to the traditional norms and command structures of the IDF (including being inclusive of all

soldiers regardless of faith, persuasion, or sexual orientation.) This move, though, is being met with resistance on the part of some of the leaders of the mechinot. (See below regarding R. Yigal Levenstein's speech).<sup>19</sup>

## Religious Zionists in the Mainstream Electronic Media

Religious Zionists have also recently become visible in the mainstream media. This phenomenon is part of the Religious Zionist ambition to become part of the Israeli mainstream, and, at the same time, to influence it. It must be noted, however, that the attempt to impact the Israeli mainstream is somewhat more muted in this area than in the political or even the military arenas. While some commentators – e.g. Segal and Emily Amrousi – are ideologically identified, other correspondents, such as Amit Segal are less so.

In order to facilitate its members' entrance into the media, the Religious Zionist community has developed programs and schools that provide training in cinema and electronic media. The contemporary openness to Religious Zionist correspondents and commentators is apparently connected to the policy of increased multiculturalism and pluralism in the electronic media.<sup>20</sup>

## The Reduction in Religiosity

The most noticeable thing about the rise of the current strain of integral nationalist Religious Zionism 40 and 50 years ago was the increase of religiosity and rigor in religious observance.

This had very concrete and palpable expressions. Young men, upon reaching manhood, went off to study Torah within the confines of yeshivot. Observance of the mitzvot and the Halacha ceased to be a generalized marker signifying loyalty to the religious outlook and its construction of the Zionist endeavor. Thus, young men began to observe with care and attention those laws which had hitherto been treated fairly laxly such as wearing *tzizit* the entire day and not only during prayer, and consistent participation in communal prayer. Among young women, the change was perhaps even more palpable. Despite the fashion of mini-skirts in the late 1960s and early 1970s they lengthened their skirts and sleeves to conform to the legal-textual dictates of “modest dress,” ceased wearing trousers, and, after marriage, covered their hair, all this in contrast to the previous generation. In many religious neighborhoods and settlements, a more serious religious ambience began to take hold – characterized by classes in Talmud and Torah and widespread attendance at communal prayer.

The last 15 years have seen a relaxation of religious rigor at least in certain circles in the Religious Zionist community. Again, women's dress and appearance has played a signifying role. Many married women today do not fully cover their hair, but more symbolically put on a kerchief or wide ribbon through which most of their hair is visible. Some married religious Zionist women have removed their hair covering altogether; Similarly, in certain circles there has been a return to women's trousers and short sleeves. The religious press has treated these changes not as deviance but as legitimate social developments.

A certain change has also been introduced into relations between the sexes. Mixed-sex “salon dancing” has also been introduced into some Religious Zionist weddings (toward the end of the evening). Even premarital intimacy (to various degrees) seems to be somewhat more prevalent and acceptable. Again, the religious media has highlighted these developments and treated them as legitimate human interest stories, without unequivocal condemnation.<sup>21</sup>

There have also been widespread reports in the religious press and media about certain behaviors, among some young people, including alcohol and drug use, sexual relations, pornography, and participation in rock and roll or pop culture. In contrast to the past, not only is there more willingness to discuss such phenomena, writers and educators attempt to understand them and what (legitimate) needs they serve.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps the most striking measure of diminished religiosity is the vastly increased enlistment of religious women in the IDF. From 2010 to today, the number of young women entering military service has more than doubled, from 935 to over 2000.<sup>23</sup> Many of these young women come from institutions that are publically identified as strictly Orthodox and even Nationalist Haredi. These young women also do not restrict their service to units that were traditionally reserved for Orthodox women soldiers such as soldier-teacher units. Today, they serve in a wide variety of units, especially in intelligence and even in combat units.

The resulting picture is a much wider spectrum of religious observance than was prevalent (or at

least was presented as prevalent) 20 years ago. Indeed, there are groups that continue to strictly adhere to all the stringent practices, and even intensify them. At the same time, there are many groups and individuals who are quite lenient (*Leitim* in Religious Zionist slang) and there is a huge population in the middle that adheres to various gradients of strictness.

Alongside these differences in behavior (for which it is very difficult to obtain hard data) there is also awareness, journalistically, academically and among the subjects themselves of different ideological streams and orientations, mainly in regard to the degree or extent of religiosity. Newspapers that appeal to the Religious Zionist public periodically publish articles asking whether the Religious Zionist public indeed consists of a single group or whether it is helplessly divided among different sub-groups. Academically, various studies assume that the Religious Zionist public is organized into a number of subgroups that can be ordered according to a spectrum of more or less religiosity or conservative to liberal religious orientations. We will look at two relatively recent surveys: The survey published by Tamar Herman and her staff at the Israeli Democracy Institute (IDI) in 2014, and the 2007 survey conducted as part of Hanan Moses' doctorate.

The IDI survey first asked a large representative sample (4,597) of the general Jewish Israeli population whether they belong, both in their outlook and their way of life, to the National Religious sector. Twenty-two percent answered that they did to a large or very large extent. The survey then asked those who did identify as

national religious to identify themselves in terms of the degree of their religiosity. The group that identified as modern/liberal National Religious turned out to be twice as large (12 percent) as the group that identified as Haredi/Torani National Religious (6 percent).<sup>24</sup> One of the surprises of the IDI survey was that the segment that identifies as "National Religious" is much larger and more variegated than is commonly supposed. From our point of view, what is especially interesting is that fully 24 percent of those who said they "belonged to the National Religious sector" defined

**The most striking measure of diminished religiosity is the increased enlistment of religious women in the IDF.**

themselves as "traditional religious," not as fully Orthodox. According to this survey at least 37 percent of the sector is either liberal Orthodox or not fully Orthodox (another 12 percent is either "traditional-not religious" or "secular"). Thus, the spectrum that we saw above in regard to religious observance

repeats itself in regard to self-definition.

The implications of this extend to the authority of rabbis in regard to political issues. While 58 percent of the Religious Zionist total population reports that it to a great or very great extent, attributes importance to the rulings of rabbis on political issues, over a third reported that it, did not attribute such importance. This attitude was especially characteristic of the liberal Orthodox population.<sup>25</sup>

We can see this ideological spectrum in regard

to other issues as well; the survey Hanan Moses conducted in 2007 inquired about a whole range of issues. He too, divided his population into three main groups: Torani Nationalists (corresponding to Haredi nationalists in the IDI survey), Religious Zionist Bourgeoisie (corresponding to "just" Religious Nationalists) and Modern Orthodox. These classifications were confirmed, more or less, by the respondents themselves when asked to provide religious self-definition. Moses asked the respondents about a whole range of issues<sup>26</sup>, and their answers more or less organize themselves according to the three main group classifications with the Torani Nationalists giving the most conservative answers, the Bourgeoisie in the middle, and the Modern Orthodox being the most liberal. This pattern repeated itself in regard to attitudes regarding women; the Arab minority; the secular population; America, the West and Western values; rabbinic authority; change in the Halacha; and homosexuals. Such differences emerged with great force in the summer of 2016. R. Yigal Levenstein, the very conservative co-head of the mechina in Eli, savagely attacked the LGBT community in a speech that was widely circulated on YouTube repeatedly calling them "perverts." In response a significant number of liberal Religious Zionists joined the Gay Pride Parade held in Jerusalem in July.

## Being Less Sectarian and Religious Increases the Impact and Appeal of Religious Zionism

The two phenomena just discussed – the attempt on the part of Religious Zionists to become part of the moral, political, and cultural leadership of Israel, and the decline in religiosity among part of the Religious Zionist camp seem to be related. The reduction in religiosity allows part of the Religious Zionist community, and especially its political leadership, to project an image of Religious Zionists as stakeholders in the Israeli mainstream lifestyle, not a religiously outlandish sectarian community. The Religious Zionist leadership hopes this projection will ease their entrance into national leadership positions and their acceptance by the broader Israeli public. Thus, what we have here is a truly dialectical process. **Decreased** religiosity **within** the Religious Zionist community will facilitate Religious Zionist leadership at the national level in Israel, and in turn **increase** religionization of the Israeli public sphere.

A number of phenomena seem to exhibit these dialectical characteristics. The first is the journalistic phenomenon *Motzash*, which is sort of the style, arts, culture, and home supplement of *Makor Rishon*, one of Israel's more conservative newspapers. *Motzash* is a portmanteau of *Motzei Shabbat*, Saturday night. Originally, in a chatty, gossipy style, it covered fashion, fads, social trends, personalities, and politics in the Religious Zionist sector. This supplement, which first appeared about five years ago, signifies a recognition of the reality that if the Israeli state and society are to

embody divine ideals, somehow these ideals will be intertwined with these mundane, materialistic objects and concerns.

In February 2016, *Motzash* announced a new departure: that it would expand its scope beyond the consumerist and cultural issues of the Religious Zionist sector, and cover Israeli culture and consumerism as a whole. It is worth quoting from the opening letter from the publisher announcing the change:

"In these past five years [since the founding of *Motzash*], the [Religious Zionist] public itself has engendered a revolution and has captured new heights. Its increasing influence in the all-Israeli public space is recognizable in every sphere: in politics, in the military, in the defense establishment, in the media, and in culture.

**Reduction of religiosity allows Religious Zionists an image of stakeholders in the Israeli mainstream lifestyle**

We transformed ourselves from followers into leaders. We matured.

Also, we at *Motzash* decided that it is time to become mature. To exit ... our little *shtetl*. To construct another story upon our strong foundations, to ascend and widen our gaze to the left and to the right to the horizon..."<sup>27</sup>

This letter not only confirms the process elaborated in this chapter, it celebrates it. The "new" *Motzash* does not shy away from sensationalist topics such as prostitution. But it

also devoted a recent special issue favorable to the changes in Israeli culture being led by Miri Regev.<sup>28</sup> In other words, leading, even if it means to open a space for traditional-religious Mizrahi and Dati creations it also entails a greater openness to more worldly and non-religious phenomena.

A similar dialectic obtains vis-a-vis the military. While, as we have seen, many observers have noticed (and some have expressed concern about) the increasing influence of rabbis and their institutions on the Israeli military, the characteristics of the *Mechinistim*, the officers and elite soldiers who are graduates of the *mechina*, are a different story. Although filled with motivation and deep adherence to Religious Zionist ideology, they are also in many ways "regular guys," who listen to the same music and watch the same sports and movies as the other soldiers. Thus, their leadership and influence are more easily accepted. Despite its ambition of educating the entire military into its ideology of integral nationalism, in certain ways the military rabbinate has also proved accommodating. The Chief Rabbi of the IDF has allowed, for instance, soldiers to participate in ceremonies and events that include women singing.

Developments in political ideology have followed a similar path. About 15 years ago, scholars at Bar-Ilan University (a university under Orthodox auspices) started to translate Religious Zionist political theology into more universalist political philosophical terms. On the basis of Aristotle, Machiavelli, the Roman political tradition and other thinkers and traditions, these scholars

started to hold up "republican (collectivist or communitarian) democracy" and nationalism as autonomous political ideals. That is, they provided justifications for these ideals not on the basis of R. Kook's theology and metaphysics, but on the basis of Western philosophical arguments. It would seem that they undertook this enterprise because they realized that in order to have an impact on Israeli public discourse they need to formulate their viewpoint and ideology in universalistic and Western terms, and because they themselves wished to be less sectarian and obscurantist and more part of the Israeli intellectual mainstream. Thus, the Department of Political Science and the Law School at Bar Ilan, together with think tanks and foundations<sup>29</sup> continue to train cadres of young scholars with a nationalist and "republican" point of view couched in Western and secular – and not in theological or metaphysical – terms. Some of these young scholars played central roles in the reform and the revision of the national civics curriculum to reflect a more nationalist and republican outlook.<sup>30</sup>

The process detailed in this section, was clearly a central plank of the electoral strategy adopted by Naftali Bennett and the Jewish Home Party. Bennett himself did not study in a yeshiva and seems to belong to the more religiously relaxed pole of the Religious Zionist community. His wife, Gilat, did not grow up Orthodox and she does not cover her hair nor always dress in standard Orthodox garb. In a recent favorable interview in *Motzash*, designed to make her more acceptable to the Jewish Home's Orthodox constituents,

she admitted that accommodating herself to the Orthodox way of life was still a process.<sup>31</sup> As we have already pointed out, Jewish Home's number-two party leader, Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, is a secular Tel Aviv woman. Secular figures such as Ronen Shoval and Danny Dayan were encouraged to compete in the most recent primaries, and the party's parliamentary delegation at first included Yinon Magal, a well know grass smoking Tel Aviv media person. This strategy seemed work in the 2013 elections; Jewish Home increased its representation by four mandates. In 2015, however, those mandates went over to the Likud. From our point of view, the results of both elections were very similar. Religious/right-wing voters want to vote for Religious Zionist integral nationalist politicians in a framework that is not narrowly sectarian or sectorial, but rather national and concerned with Israeli society as a whole.

The recent IDI survey we quoted earlier may confirm this. The survey showed that fully 22 percent of the Jewish Israeli population "belong" to the National Religious sector. Of these, 24 percent define themselves as "traditional-religious," and another 12 percent identified as "traditional-not religious" or secular. In other words, fully 36 percent of those who identity as National Religious are not fully Orthodox and practice a religious life style that is less observant than what had been considered the core National Religious population.

## Conclusion

As is the case in other countries (e.g. India, Algeria) religious nationalism is on the rise.<sup>32</sup>

Israel's regime and public discourse has become more visibly Jewishly nationalist in recent years. The increasing prominence of Religious Zionists in the government and in central institutions has been an important contributing factor to this. Despite the fact that Religious Zionists, in general, wish to advance religious and religious nationalist interests, they have also, on occasion, exhibited a more open and inclusive policy toward both Jewish and non-Jewish groups in Israel. This was exemplified in Naftali Bennett's (as Minister of Religious Affairs) attempt to erect a prayer space for liberal Jewish groups at the Western Wall, and his continuing support for such a space, along with that of Ayelet Shaked. It appears that this openness and inclusiveness is related to the decline of conservative, strictly Orthodox and sectarian religious orientations among certain Religious Zionist groups.

## Endnotes

\* In this chapter we use the terms Religious Zionist and National Religious interchangeably.

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11 <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/47/ART2/724/707.html>

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17 Levy, op. cit. 132. There are 27 secular or mixed mechinot, Yair Sheleg, "Exiting the Hothouse", Shabbat Supplement, Makor Rishon, May 11, 2016. The importance and the contribution of the Mechina programs was publically recognized on Independence Day 2016, when R. Eli Sadan was

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19 Kobi Nachshoni, "Senior Rabbi Condemns IDF for Accommodating LGBT 'Perverts'", <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4829206,00.html>

20 Thus, the companies that hold the franchise in the Second Channel must provide cultural and ethnic variation.

21 See Gai Ezra, "Rabbi Amnon Bazak against Motzash", Srugim <http://www.srugim.co.il/129924-%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%91-%D7%91%D7%96%D7%A7-%D7%A0%D7%92%D7%93-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%92%D7%96%D7%99%D7%9F-%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A6%D7%A9-%D7%9E%D7%92%D7%9E%D7%94-%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%A2%D7%A8%D7%AA>

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## Jewish People Ways and Means, 2016-2015

This portion of the annual assessment considers the sources and uses of Jewish people wealth for Jewish people purposes. In previous years we have offered insights into issues of priority and allocation of funding. In this year's assessment we look at three different issues in the creation of material resources for affecting Jewish people outcomes. First, we will present an overview of the prospects and domestic controversies surrounding exploitation of Israel's newly discovered fossil fuel riches. This is followed by a discussion of the structure of Israel's economy – in fact, its two largely separate economies – as reflected in an increasing balance of evidence from OECD and domestic economic observers. Finally, we discuss the broad trajectory of Jewish giving in the United States.

### **The Development and Uses of Israel's Natural Gas**

News stories regarding Israel's newly discovered energy wealth have mainly been of two types. The first have been entirely accurate descriptions of Israel's off-shore finds of natural gas (NG) as being among the world's largest over the past decade. The second cover the domestic controversy over the use and policy regarding these same finds. For those outside of Israel (and for many within it) it may be difficult reconciling these two news streams. We will briefly describe the nature of the current status of the disputes. It is worthwhile reviewing this recent history also because of the light it sheds on some of the most fundamental domestic economic and social policy disagreements in Israel.

When the 21<sup>st</sup> century began, Israel was taking its first tentative steps toward NG and away from coal as a primary fuel for electricity (with reliance on coal itself representing a shift from prior dependence on imported petroleum fuels before the 1973 oil embargoes.) Controversially, the source of the first natural gas was planned in the late 1990s to be via pipeline from Egypt, up to a potential 6.5 billion cubic meters (BCM) per year, a figure governed by pipeline capacity and Egyptian operating protocols.<sup>1</sup> Between signing the contracts and the beginning of Egyptian NG's flow, Israel discovered deposits of

**The discovered natural gas would be sufficient to meet Israel's needs well toward the end of the 21st century**

its own in shallow waters not far off shore. This deposit, of about 33 BCM, while welcome was not sufficient to relieve the need for further imports. It did, however, prove to be crucial and timely (but now depleted) in meeting the shortfall caused by the cutoff of NG deliveries from post-

Mubarak Egypt. But beginning in 2009, two further major deposits of proven reserves have dwarfed the original find and each successive find has been of greater magnitude than the one before.<sup>2</sup> Located in relatively deeper water and much further off-shore, but still within Israel's exclusive economic zone as defined by international law, this NG, if recovered, would be sufficient to meet Israel's needs well toward the end of the century.<sup>3</sup>

As has been the case in other suddenly resource-wealthy countries, Israel has faced a number of

challenges along with the blessings. In fact, the negative consequences for economic development due to over-reliance on this source of income, government integrity, and even national political stability stemming from mineral wealth have caused some to refer to this as the "resource curse." This is even true to some extent in developed countries such as the Netherlands whose North Sea oil finds in the 1960s and 70s led to the so-called "Dutch disease" with the sudden increase in export wealth causing rapid appreciation of the currency and negative effects on other sectors. Much of Israel's policy conversation has involved framing a course to avoid social, economic, financial, and political dislocations in exploiting the NG resource.

As might be expected with such a potential game changer, the different proposals for policy cut across already sensitive fault-line issues: economic equity across social classes and generations, national priorities, concentration of capital and monopolization, law and, of course, energy security. An entirely new legal framework needed to be erected because the 1952 Oil Law was clearly inadequate to the sudden need (and clearly had been designed to encourage exploration under circumstances in which large returns were highly improbable.) A natural gas authority was established and a government natural gas pipeline company was set up to provide main-line distribution services with private companies envisioned to supply individual businesses and homes.<sup>4</sup>

The Israeli partner in all three of the major NG reserves proven so far has been the Delek Group. In each case, though, it has been a minority

shareholder in the drilling consortiums formed and led by Noble Energy of Houston because of the great need for up-front investment and technical expertise. Thus, from the beginning the NG discoveries raised questions about domestic monopoly and, if not outright ownership, then certainly how all the parties – foreign, domestic and public – were to benefit and their different interests reconciled.<sup>5</sup>

Several decisions were made before 2015, none of them without dispute, but now generally resolved to the satisfaction of most Israelis. The need to protect a small and very open economy from ill financial effects was recognized early on and the National Economic Council within the Prime Minister's Office led efforts to create a sovereign wealth fund to limit the potential effect of sudden excess liquidity.<sup>6</sup> Israel's sovereign wealth fund is scheduled to come into being in 2016 under the aegis of the Bank of Israel.

But what would be the public's share from the NG once it began to flow? How quickly would NG be extracted and to what uses would it be put? The consortium partners (and to some extent the Ministry of Finance) were interested in high volume flows from the reserves with the allocation between domestic or export markets determined by business considerations. Environmentalists, groups motivated by concerns for social and inter-generational equity, and those focused on long-term energy security for Israel wished for a more measured rate of exploitation and greater government control and public benefit.

A government expert panel led by economics professor emeritus Eytan Sheshinski of Hebrew

University was formed in 2010 to consider some of the questions. The committee's report, after a contentious process replete with allegations of intimidation,<sup>7</sup> was eventually approved and accepted by the government in early 2011. A second sitting of the panel looking beyond NG more broadly at natural resources in general later amplified the original recommendations. The principal finding was to increase gradually the tax on oil and gas profits from 33 percent to a level of around 60 percent in keeping with typical practice in other countries (not including the U.S.) This was judged to be a reasonable trade-off between the public interest and maintaining incentives spurring further exploration and exploitation.<sup>8</sup>

But in 2015, the NG issue became a divisive roller coaster. Further exploitation of the NG, if desired, depends upon large-scale investment. Noble Energy as the principal foreign investor, and in its view an injured party because of uncertainty over government policy, stated a need for regulatory stability and sufficiently rapid NG recovery to make its investment worthwhile. This means, in effect, exporting much of Israel's NG beyond the small domestic market. But this would also be very much to the benefit of Delek Group companies. A framework for moving forward<sup>9</sup> was vetoed by Israel's anti-trust commissioner for this reason, thus creating a political firestorm that saw the

**Noble Energy as the principal foreign investor, stated a need to export much of Israel's NG beyond the small domestic market**

commissioner step down after ruling, an interim commissioner refusing to rule further on the issue, and Minister for Economy Arye Deri also stepping down rather than overruling the commissioner's finding without Knesset approval – a path rendered perilous when two MKs from the ruling 61-seat (one-vote majority) coalition recused themselves because of personal involvement.

Critics of the gas framework object both to the concentration of financial gains and the large-scale export of Israel's resource. These critics were not mollified when Prime Minister Netanyahu assumed the mantle of minister of economy thus clearing the way for an override of the anti-trust ruling.<sup>10</sup> Complicating factors were the recent discovery of additional large NG reserves in Egypt and falling global energy prices (thus creating more immediate commercial pressure), as well as the geopolitical considerations of just where Israel's NG would go, how it would get there, and who else might now be locking in contracts with the same buyer.<sup>11</sup> These considerations suggested the need for speed in moving forward to proponents who focused on the potential impact of lower energy costs on Israel's manufacturing, economic growth, and cost of living. Critics, however, argued that because NG was already flowing from Tamar to the domestic market there was both time and need to assess the best public policy for exploiting the much larger Leviathan field in the future.

The matter appeared to be resolved politically in December 2015 with the successful override of the anti-trust finding and approval by the Knesset of the NG deal – but not necessarily either legally or in the court of public opinion. But it was not to be.

Opponents mounted a successful legal challenge. As of this writing, Israel's Supreme Court has ruled against the policy on the grounds that its terms unduly bind the government to making no changes in the terms governing the exploitation, sale, regulation, and taxation of the NG for an excessive period (10 years) without having received legislative approval from the Knesset. As of this writing, the government has agreed to once more redraft the proposed terms in light of the court's objections.

Not for the first time, the politics of Israel resembled the fulminations of the blind men of Hindustan each of whom thought he alone inferred the true essence of the entire elephant from the part he was closest to. Opponents and critics of the Netanyahu government view the NG deal through lenses attuned to what they perceive as consistent bias in favor of the few. This specific debate also plays out against the wider background debate on the changing nature of an Israel that was once comfortable with a more egalitarian perception of itself (whatever the reality) than current circumstances permit. Israel is now skewed toward the less egalitarian end of the OECD countries' spectrum of income and wealth shares in company with the United States and Turkey.<sup>12</sup>

But the claims regarding geopolitical considerations of the NG deal are not specious; neither do the realities of the global capital markets and recent Eastern Mediterranean energy developments suggest that excessive delay in exploiting this resource would be beneficial to Israel as a whole. Nothing is possible without

further investment and technology, neither of which may be found exclusively in Israel in the amounts and types required. Developing this market will require adherence to market terms and conditions.

Nevertheless, it is true that the net result from how the NG resource has been developed and how its flow of benefits are allocated will add further not only to the reality but perhaps more strongly to the perception of a rapidly bifurcating Israeli economy and society. Obviously, JPPI has neither standing nor expertise to make recommendations on the substantive merits of Israel's resource and NG policies. But it behooves the government and the larger Jewish world to recognize that during the economic transition Israel has been forcefully undergoing over the past two decades, no single matter of such importance may be considered solely in its own narrow terms. In a small, open, but highly dynamic economy the decisions made regarding NG will have profound effects on the nature of the Israel of the future.

## Israel: A Tale of Two Economies

That the issues raised by decisions regarding the exploitation of NG and the resulting income stream it produces should be viewed as part of a larger fabric becomes clearer when we take a broad view of Israel's development. The 2016 OECD report on Israel's economy highlighted a tale of two economies.<sup>13</sup> The first we may term "Start-up Nation": technologically innovative, competitive, export oriented, global, highly and increasingly productive, flexible, a provider of

high-tax-paying jobs, and an engine of Israel's growth and revenues. It accounts for a third of Israeli exports, but employs only around a tenth of the labor force.

The second economy could be titled "Stagnant Nation." Part of it includes public services such as health and education along with similar sectors for which productivity gains are inherently difficult to achieve the world over. (Reducing student-teacher ratios or taking time to gather full health profiles from patients may adversely affect productivity when measured narrowly.) But the focus of the OECD concern is on the other part, based on local old industries such as paper, cement, and food, as well as services such as electricity, real estate, and banking.<sup>14</sup> This economy is closed to the outside world, dependent on government protection, and exhibits low and stagnant productivity. It tends toward lower paying and even minimum wage jobs with relatively few extremely highly paid jobs dependent less on actual productivity than on the ability to extract rent<sup>15</sup> from Israeli consumers via higher prices to the extent these industries are insulated from competitive pressures. This contributes to the high cost of living in Israel. To use the economic jargon of the OECD, in the Israeli economy "highly dynamic tradable goods industries coexist with an inefficient sheltered sector to an unusual extent, dragging down overall economic performance" while "substantial deficiencies in product market regulation and competition, especially in the entire food chain, banking, and electricity, are weakening productivity and reducing incomes."<sup>16</sup>

The two economies of Start-up Nation and

Stagnant Nation co-exist through a set of institutions, such as government ministries and regulatory bodies. And these institutions by their conduct (not necessarily their existence) carry some responsibility for the polarization between the two economies, the growth in inequality, the inability of Start-up Nation to expand and of Stagnant Nation to emerge from its torpor.

Much of the service sector within the Stagnant Nation economy as well as many of its industrial branches consists of *de facto* monopolies and cartels. The provision of electricity, banking,

**Much of the service sector within the Stagnant Nation economy consists of *de facto* monopolies and cartels**

transportation, and other vital services affects the rest of the Israeli economy. If the Israeli public has no access to competitive providers in these sectors, it yields rents stemming from higher prices, corruption, or poor services. The proceeds from these extracted rents may flow disproportionately to a

small class of highly unionized and frequently family-related workers in the form of secure jobs, high salaries that are not grounded in the productivity of the salaried, fewer working hours, secure and high pensions, and various other perquisites. This creates two groups – those with the “in”, who have been able to wall off their jobs and privileges, and those outside this wall who lack job security and sometimes the protection of basic labor rights. This “two-caste” system also

exists in the industrial sector of Stagnant Nation, in which some sectors, such as food, cement, minerals, and gas, are insulated from competitive pressures through regulation and so may achieve high prices without necessarily delivering goods of commensurate quality.

Israel does possess an open economy by virtue of the need to export globally. But in the reverse direction, some players dedicate substantial resources to securing continued insulation from competitive pressures. This effort operates almost entirely at the level of government decisions and regulation. Such counter-pressure may come from employing the power of the unions to organize politically to prevent reform and the introduction of competition that would force down prices. In this, the owners have every interest in cooperating with their unions. Lobbying and public relations further support these political mobilization efforts. In Israel as elsewhere, in this regard at least there exists a community of interest between owners and unions as the owners use the employees to decry that any introduction of competition will necessarily lead to loss of jobs and therefore present political danger. While employees are critical to the ability of the owners to thwart competition, in Stagnant Nation the resulting rent is not necessarily shared with the employees who may then all the more come to fear loss of their jobs to competition.

The ability of Stagnant Nation to protect itself from competitive pressures is due also to its organization. Substantial sections of this economy are controlled through pyramid structures which

enable a few individuals to wield control over numerous industries with relatively small capital investments. These ownership structures may also be used to channel many of the ensuing rents to the CEO's and top management in the form of high salaries. The other side of the coin is low paying, even minimum wage, and generally insecure jobs. While the pyramid ownership structures have come under attack through the "Concentration of Economic Control" law and the opening up to competition of the communications sector, a key component of many such pyramids, these structures continue to dominate Israel's Stagnant Nation economy. Recently there have been prominent trials and convictions of such *bêtes noires* of economic concentration opponents as Nochi Dankner, the controlling shareholder of the prominent IDB group. But further government pressure would need to be applied to take the major conglomerates apart.

The element that makes this a witches' brew and the growing inequality in Israeli society difficult to resolve is the low mobility between the two sectors: Those with the skills to find a job in Stagnant Nation do not have the skills to transfer into Start-up Nation. Start-up Nation exhibits high and growing productivity – on par with the upper tier among OECD countries – driven by its export and global orientation. Stagnant Nation exhibits low and stagnant productivity pulling Israel's entire productivity to the low end of the OECD. This low level of productivity is somewhat mitigated through many more working hours, but this serves also to lower the quality of life of workers in these sectors.

Economic theory suggests that the rise of productivity in one sector of an economy should raise productivity and wages in others as the highly productive sectors compete with less productive ones for the same human resources, forcing them to become more efficient and productive. But this theoretically pure transmission belt becomes all too frequently attenuated in the case of Israel. Many of those who are employed in Stagnant Nation lack the minimal educational attainments that would allow them to acquire the skills to join Start-up Nation. This means that even as Israel is witnessing increasing employment among groups that were not previously participants in Israel's labor force such as Haredi men, those men, trapped by their limited education, have little choice but to accept low paid and low skilled Stagnant Nation jobs. In addition, despite growth in attendance of higher education in Israel, there is no growth in the study of sciences, math and engineering, an issue that arises already in the high schools, thereby further limiting the ability of Start-up Nation to grow and increase its contribution to the Israeli economy as a whole.<sup>17</sup> One report on the Israeli economy described half of the children of Israel as receiving "third world education."<sup>18</sup>

While the ability of Start-up Nation to increase its share of the Israeli economy and work force and

**The Stagnant Nation's low productivity pulls Israel's entire productivity to the low end of the OECD**

drive up productivity is limited by the educational profiles of potential employees, the compulsion for Stagnant Economy to achieve rising productivity is limited by insulation from competitive pressures. In fact, those few sectors, such as clothing, which are no longer protected from competitive pressures, have indeed seen productivity gains. But much of Stagnant Nation remains somewhat freed from exposure to global competition.

There is thus a paradox facing those responsible for Israeli policy. Productivity drives wages and growth which, in turn, drive economic transformation. But productivity is simply the value of output divided by hours worked. One may enhance productivity by either improving the value of the goods and services produced or investing to reduce the labor required (or both.) Economic transformation may, indeed, create new employment but often at the expense of already existing jobs. This is the source of much of the economic discontent that has swept the U.S. and Europe in recent years and which has been translated into political upheaval. Unemployment has not really been a major issue in labor-scarce Israel in recent decades. Instead, discontinuities have led not to job layoffs but rather to the growth of disparity among wage earners. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century “people’s economies” of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union deliberately maintained many facilities, especially in light industries such as textiles, so that there would be steady opportunity for employment of less skilled workers or in less developed regions. But this policy contributed to a general inability to accrue economic surpluses which also in the end led directly to the social and political upheaval

that terminated these regimes. Thus while the Stagnant Nation economy is not sustainable without cost, simply to raise productivity by replacing workers with machines or sending jobs offshore could entail different adverse outcomes as well.

In Israel the tale of two economies parallels, in some measure, political, ideological and social fissures in Israeli society, and exacerbates them. Startup Nation is geographically concentrated in Israel’s main cities of the center and the strip along the Mediterranean – the Gush Dan and Haifa. Within Israel, there is one nation that often has little in common in terms of values and aspirations with the other. While there are Haredim, Mizrahi Jews, and settlers among those employed in Startup Nation, its citizenry skews toward young secular men, mostly Israel-born, or immigrants from the former Soviet Union and the West. They are more likely than the rest of Israel to vote for centrist and left of center parties. Their profile makes them the most globally mobile group in Israeli society. Therefore, they have a choice to exit Israel and be employed in the world’s top companies and cities which many others lack. Those who inhabit Startup Nation care not only about their economic opportunities, but also about the ability to live in a country and society that reflects their values.

Thus the very success that has led to Israel’s growing economic and technological prowess leads it to a crossroads. The current path of sustaining two economies and the two resulting polarized nations within Israel seems an increasingly uncomfortable fit. Economic concerns are actually intimately bound to political and

social developments; it may become increasingly difficult to keep dysfunction in the former from widening fault lines across the latter. Those who are sustaining the Israeli economy and tax base may come to feel that they have the least voice in the making of its policies, whether politically or through social protests, and so participate in a steady and individual exit of the members of Start-up Nation from Israel altogether. On the other hand, as has been seen elsewhere, the rage of the disenfranchised and disadvantaged, if they are simply displaced by computers and robots, or if their jobs are simply sent offshore, may lead to political and social currents threatening to wash away the very foundations upon which Israel has been predicated.

In light of this configuration, the OECD made a series of recommendations of which the following is one:

Enhancing social cohesion would raise sustainable long-term growth...Israel has to make fiscal room for fostering more inclusive growth and preparing for the future. Boosting investment in infrastructure, promoting skills, especially of disadvantaged groups, developing adult vocational education and training and enhancing the redistribution system, including for the elderly, are achievable without sacrificing prudent fiscal policy.<sup>19</sup>

The issue of more inclusive growth needs to be read broadly. This goes beyond the usual recommendations about Haredim and Arabs. Workers who find themselves in Stagnant Nation make up a good part of the lower middle class.

If they are not to become increasingly excluded, policy will need to be framed with that objective in mind rather than from some of the narrower perspectives that have often been the basis for Israel's economic strategies heretofore.

## **Generational Change and Jewish Philanthropy in North America**

The well-being of Jewish communities outside Israel is largely determined by the national and local governments of the countries in which they reside. The Jewish character of these communities, however, and their cultural and social continuity are in the hands of those communities alone. This makes the sources and uses of Jewish wealth (aka material resources) in North America and elsewhere a serious issue that would behoove the Jewish people at long last to regard seriously. As JPPI has pointed out in prior Annual Assessments, the evidence that the importance of this aspect of Jewish life is widely recognized is still lacking.

As a case in point, we consider the issue of generational transition in the United States. The first point is that the conventional wisdom regarding the demise of the federation system, like that of Mark Twain's while he was still very much alive, may perhaps be greatly exaggerated. The second point is – perhaps not: we lack the information to allow us to actually understand what is going on. These two points are thoroughly intertwined.

From the beginning of Jewish habitation in North America the needs of those in need within Jewish communities – the poor, the elderly

and new immigrants – were primarily met by Jewish communal groups. At first, resources were provided via self-help groups, synagogues, and then through the institutional fabric of local federations and national Jewish organizations that were created in the later decades of the 19th and earliest decades of the 20th century. The question is whether this structure is changing – or worse, failing to change – in response to trends that may prove transformative.

The conventional wisdom is shifting toward a belief that, indeed, the older model is in trouble. The

**There have been shifts from traditional sources of funding toward planned giving campaigns**

thread of this hypothesis notes the passing of the generation with living memory of the *shoah*, of a world without Israel and of the wide spread of anti-Semitic attitudes which often took practical and even violent form. The sense of community of

this generation was inculcated in them by parents or grandparents who themselves were immigrants from closely knit traditional Jewish communities abroad. This interpretation then weaves together corollaries such as a trend toward weaker Jewish identification (or less identification with Israel – two different things), a greater desire to be prominent in giving to non-Jewish causes (albeit often said to be informed by core Jewish values), a skewing of community wealth with donations becoming most preponderant at the highest percentiles of wealth, and a penchant for more hands-on, personalized and outcome-oriented

philanthropy. In this telling, the consequence is inevitably either a diminution in the relative share of the more traditional communitarian organizations such as federations or a capture and transformation of these institutions by a relatively small group of very high net worth individuals and private foundations.

The counter to the conventional wisdom frames a different set of hypotheses for which there is also anecdotal and, to a degree, quantitative factual support. In this telling, while federations are continuing to sustain a network of domestic and overseas agencies, they have also become innovators.<sup>20</sup> They have conformed and are conforming to both the opportunities and needs of the times and in this act of innovation are preserving both their organization and mission (with the latter reconfigured to accord with the needs of their communities in the early 21st century). There has now been considerable recovery from the disasters stemming from the Madoff affair and the Great Recession and perhaps even some growth. To be sure, there have been shifts from traditional sources of funding such as reliance on mailed appeals, but these have been met by new initiatives such as planned giving campaigns. And these two income sources are categorically different from each other. Mail campaigns were important for the current account balance but never solely about dollars; they were about participation as well. Growth in planned giving is not so much a reaction to a flattened effectiveness of direct mail but rather an instance of adaptation and innovation designed to secure both assistance from wealthy families in a

position to provide it and continuity of services on the current account through income generation from a capital account independent of the annual campaign cycle. In fact, rather than a consistent trajectory toward an ever more concentrated core of supporters and personally directed Jewish philanthropies, a number of phenomena have countervailed the trend. Several of the tallest poles from what might be termed the Golden Age of Jewish philanthropic entrepreneurship (e.g., Avichai, Bronfman, Glazer et al.) have now either been wound down or are undergoing a shift from active Jewish giving.

What is the actual situation? This is an important question for Jewish people concern and U.S. communitarian attention. But this then raises the practical issues discussed previously by JPPI in this context. We lack many of the data and a good deal of the information that would allow us to gain a clearer view of what trends are most dominant and the direction they are driving this process. U.S. federations and Jewish organizations conform to federal regulations for reporting to taxation authorities on their annual income, expenditures, and activities. These are not sufficient, however, to engender a sufficient standardization across Jewish organizations that would permit cross-organizational or cross-year comparisons.<sup>21</sup> There is neither a consistent taxonomy nor sufficient detail that would permit carrying out such assessments without the expenditure of considerable labor each year. And there is no central authority either charged with the responsibility or sufficiently well-endowed with resources to carry out the effort. It could only

come from a collective decision by a critical mass of such institutions to take upon themselves the discipline of framing and adhering to a common protocol allowing evaluation from a community, national, and Jewish people perspective.

What appears largely to be supported by the evidence is that the relative importance of community-based, principally federation, shares of Jewish charitable funding is declining, but this is more a statement of basic arithmetic than necessarily of substantive trends: when new charities enter the arena, the relative shares of incumbents necessarily decline. But the absolute value of those incumbent shares may still increase. In other words, what may be on the decline is less the federation system than the dominance enjoyed by that system in the world of U.S. Jewish philanthropy.

**The Jewish organizational world should frame and adhere to a common accountancy protocol**

Although federations were founded with the intent to serve the local community, after they began to amalgamate with the local United Jewish Appeal beginning in the 1930s, they also became a major focus for Jewish overseas relief and, eventually, Israel-oriented giving and action as well. This, too, has affected the current transition in the sources and uses of Jewish wealth for Jewish people purposes in the United States. What may be the less obvious story is precisely the dog that did not bark – that is, the resilience of the federation model in an era in which the perception

of economic threats to Israel, and so the impetus toward Israel-related giving, for which federations served as major conduits, has declined.<sup>22</sup> As one data point, when United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York merged with the New York Federation in 1986, NY UJA was raising 70 percent of the total funds pre-merger and the local federation 30 percent. This shows how UJA's focus on Israel was a major driver of local Jewish giving. With Israel's surging economic strength, its dominant security position in the Middle East, and the increasing disproportion between the scale of even generous U.S. giving and the scale of Israel's needs, one might have expected a decline in fundraising. Instead, despite the re-contextualization of U.S. Jewish philanthropic dollars in Israel, despite the highly reported trend to direct donor giving, despite the proliferation of Jewish organizations both in North America and in Israel, New York UJA-Federation's annual campaign receipts grew from \$115 million in 1999 to \$153 million in 2008 and is expected to exceed the 2008 level (and thus fully recover from the Great Recession) in 2016. The stronger federations such as Baltimore, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Miami, and Washington have experienced similar results. Federations appear stronger than most predicted and the conventional wisdom continues to report.

The transformation of the Israel dimension in North American Jewish philanthropy demonstrates that the flow of money and its use for Jewish people purposes is often part of a larger story. While changes in how U.S. Jews regard Israel may affect the sources and uses of Jewish community resources, it is also the case

that tracking such patterns may, in turn, give us insight into both fundamental changes in attitudes and their practical effect. In this case, a reconfiguration of traditional patterns driven by transformations of perceptions of Israel may be either a signal or confirmation of a profound change to what has been, since the founding of Israel, one of the fundamental totems of Jewish identity in North America. If so, this would suggest the need for serious attention by those who monitor geopolitical trends. They would need to weigh what might ensue from a resulting rebalancing of allegiances, interests, and priorities within the Israel-Washington-American Jewish triangle. Hence the importance of such a shift and the value of information providing early warning of its trajectory goes beyond "mere" questions of finance and budgetary accounting.

What is to be done? Passively, there is a need to be capable of observing more accurately the drivers of Jewish giving as they may, indeed, shift over time in response to generational and other substantive changes. But to assume a more activist posture, the Jewish people and the affected communities need to be able to weigh different means to align such phenomena in service to major Jewish people interests and needs. Neither will occur in the absence of a marked shift in the availability of information. This would require addressing several needs. One is for more uniform reporting and accounting protocols to support aggregation and comparison. Allied with this would be greater knowledge sharing in aggregate among Jewish organizations. The point is not necessarily to disclose details about particular gifts or bequests

which may be in themselves sensitive or otherwise confidential. Rather, it is to enhance confidence that the general categories into which each such gifts may be fit share consistency with those used by similar organizations. In the absence of this, the effort required to gather and scrub any credible data sets will be so large as to deter attempts to create them.

These reporting protocols could easily be made consistent with IRS provisions, those of other taxation and regulatory agencies, and accepted accounting practice while also providing consistency across federations and major institutions. But this is merely preliminary. Once the information becomes – if not widely and publicly available, then at least consistent so that vetted researchers and analysts adhering to confidentiality protocols may be reasonably assured of what the data describe, it would then for the first time truly become possible to support a review of players and processes in the Jewish people marketplace for financial supply and demand. Doing so would assist both sides of philanthropic transactions – both donors and recipients – as well as Jewish communities as a whole to better shape the correspondence between goals on one hand and ways and means on the other.

## Endnotes

1 Natural gas may occur in deposits alone but is often found in petroleum fields. For years, it was considered a waste by-product of the latter and was flared off from oil recovery installations. The reasoning behind this practice is that petroleum, being a liquid, is relatively easy to transport and use. Natural gas, being almost entirely pure methane, is not a liquid except under very cold temperature

and high pressure. This means that natural gas, if it is to be used as a fuel, must be transported either through fixed pipelines requiring massive investment and maintenance or through liquefaction and transportation as liquid natural gas (LNG), itself an expensive and technically challenging process.

2 The Tamar field's reserves of approximately 250 BCM were proven in 2009 and Leviathan's estimated 650 BCM in 2010. A third find of the same approximate size as the Tamar formation in the Daniel offshore field was announced in January 2016 but not yet proven at the time of this writing.

3 Both Lebanon and Syria have disputed Israel's exclusive control, but without much grounding either in governing law or in an ability to act effectively upon their objection. Proven NG reserves also exist off Gaza and these have been formally delivered by Israel to the control of the Palestinian Authority. Hamas's takeover of Gaza in addition to other factors has caused these deposits to be left unexploited.

4 Government-owned enterprises operate as businesses with the majority or sole shareholder being the government. Among the few such entities in the U.S. are the Tennessee Valley Authority and Amtrak.

5 The Daniel field, if proven to contain NG, would be the first to involve different Israeli partners, Isramco Negev and Modiin Energy (*Haaretz*, January 17, 2016; <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/1.697863>).

6 Sovereign wealth funds are portfolios of assets including both liquid reserves and acquired equity investments managed by a government authority. They may serve several purposes. They temper the fiscal volatility in the public's portion of revenues from resource exploitation, provide "rainy day" reserves, or may be intended for use to serve strategic objectives by building up foreign or domestic assets in the form of investments. The common thread is to create a formal holding entity, the fund, as an independent buffer to reduce adverse financial consequences of potential boom (or bust) cycles by introducing a less short-term focus into decisions. The ability by the Treasury to draw upon these funds is usually deliberately highly restricted to ensure the maintenance of this insulation.

7 "Cabinet approves Sheshinski committee recommendations", *Haaretz*, January 24, 2011.

8 There is a sliding framework that allows recovery of a multiple of the original investment before the full profit tax comes into play. There is also a royalty charge for each cubic meter of extracted NG and no depletion allowance, again unlike the U.S. but in accord with practice elsewhere.

9 The framework did require the Noble-Delek partnership to sell claims on other potential reserves.

10 The anti-trust law permits this under a national security exception. It did not help matters that former Minister Deri's stepping down from his office was also the occasion for a swirl of political and budgetary horse trading. This is always true with ministerial adjustments, but the timing added fuel to opponents' narrative of short-term advantage trumping long-term national interests.

11 The considerations go well beyond the commercial in as much as Israel's NG would be most efficiently shipped via pipelines which themselves involve massive investment, long-term contracts and stable relations. A natural on-shore repository for Israel's gas might be Cyprus, for example, but then relations with Turkey would come into play. The other likely pipeline terminus might be Turkey itself which would affect and be affected by a different dynamic and geopolitical calculus. It was not just the commercial players who felt the need to begin serious planning and engagement and therefore conclude a NG accord in Israel.

12 OECD (2011). *An Overview of Growing Income Inequalities in OECD Countries: Main Findings*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

13 OECD (2016). *OECD Economic Surveys: Israel 2016*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

14 The last two have been rising in their share of the total supporting economy, but without contributing to greater productivity, merely to the high cost of living. Before the communications sector was opened up to competition, it too exhibited the many ills of this economy and would have been included in it.

15 This familiar word in this case refers to profits in excess of what would be gained in a competitive market. "Accounting profits" are calculated as income received minus actual payments

made. "Economic profits" account for the capital being used that could have been put to other, alternative uses. Thus accounting profits may be positive while the economic profits may equal zero once this opportunity cost of capital is considered. In an idealized competitive market this would be the case. Positive economic profits would be the equivalent of the term rent as used here.

16 OECD (2016), p. 10.

17 Solomon, Shoshanna, "High-tech boom may be over, Israel's chief scientist warns," *Times of Israel*, June 30, 2016

18 Klingbail, Sivan and Shiloh, Shanee, "Bye, the Beloved Country – Why Almost 40 Percent of Israelis are Thinking of Emigrating," *Haaretz*, Dec 15, 2012.

19 OECD (2016), p. 16.

20 See, for example, the discussion in "Federations and Foundations Take on Innovating and Sustaining", *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, vol. 86, nos. 1/2, Winter/Spring 2011, pp. 132-140.

21 For example, some tallies of Jewish community-supported institutions count hospitals, hospices and human service agencies operated under Jewish auspices. Yet, much of their funding is received from the federal government. Similarly, often little distinction is made between annual and capital giving.

22 Although there were considerable fluctuations during the period, the level of U.S. donations to Israeli organizations in 1975 stood at \$1.15 billion and in 2010 they were \$1.45 billion (all in 2010 dollars.) The latter number is in contrast with the high total realized in 2007, before the global financial crisis, of \$2.17 billion. (Sasson, Theodore (2014). *The New American Zionism*, New York University Press.)

## The Heritage of Jewish Literacy and Educational Achievement and the State of Education in Israel

“The State of Israel cannot fulfill its mission – that of implementing development projects and major immigrant absorption – if science is not imposed on all sectors of life; if foremost scientific conquests and sophisticated techniques do not form the basis of our agriculture, factories, industry, navigation, aviation and housing; and if maximum encouragement is not given to those engaged in science, both pure and applied, to expand those conquests.”

(David Ben-Gurion, 1948)

The state of schooling and education in Israel has interested experts and politicians for decades. The media often publishes selected data from official reports and indices – both Israeli and international – demonstrating that the state of education in Israel is far from satisfactory.<sup>1</sup> The desire to excel in the spheres of education,

science, and technology stems from the tradition and culture of the Jewish people, as well as from practical aspects – the recognition that these are indispensable for Israel’s existence and success, as described by David Ben-Gurion during the state’s early days.

## Tradition of literacy

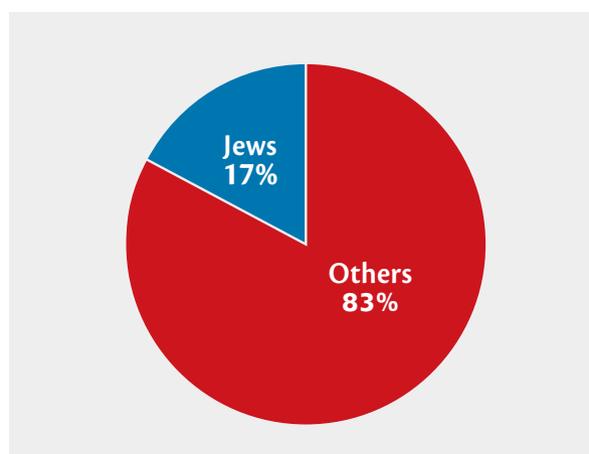
Between 63 and 65 CE the Jewish High Priest Yehoshua ben Gamla issued an edict requiring all Jews to send their sons to school so that they could learn to read the Torah. The destruction of the Second Temple had changed Judaism and it was no longer based on ritual and sacrifices in the Temple, but rather on Torah study, prayer, and observance of the commandments. To achieve this, the Jews had to promote literacy and Torah education. This obligation, in a world where more than 90 percent of the population could not read and write, gave Jews a relative advantage over the members of other religions, an advantage that continued for hundreds of years and served to catapult them toward success in a broad range of spheres. The Jewish culture that developed over the years continued to prioritize learning and literacy, phrases such as “the People of the Book” and “Jewish genius” were ascribed to the Jews because of their attitude toward education and their achievements in numerous scientific spheres.

Today, too, outstanding achievements and intellectual excellence are attributed to Jews. Most prominent, among other things, is the high representation of Jews on the list of recipients of prestigious awards in the scientific world. Thus, for example, out of 1,081 Nobel laureates through 2015, 185 have been Jewish (around 17 percent): in chemistry, 36 recipients constituting 14.3 percent of all recipients; in physics, 51 recipients or 19.5 percent; in medicine, 55 recipients constituting 15.5 percent; literature, 14 recipients or 10.85 percent; and in economics, 29 recipients constituting around 34 percent.

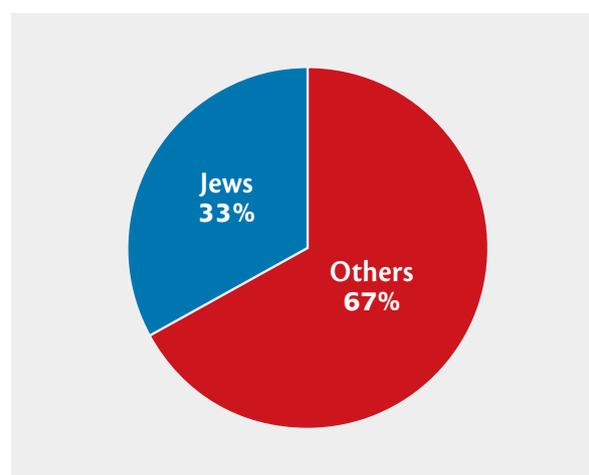
Among the 64 recipients of the Turing Award (the most prestigious prize in the field of computer science), 21 have been Jewish (around 33 percent).

And among the 311 recipients of the prestigious Wolf Prize, awarded in Israel to scientists and artists from around the world for achievements benefitting humanity, 106 have been Jewish (representing some 34 percent): chemistry, 19

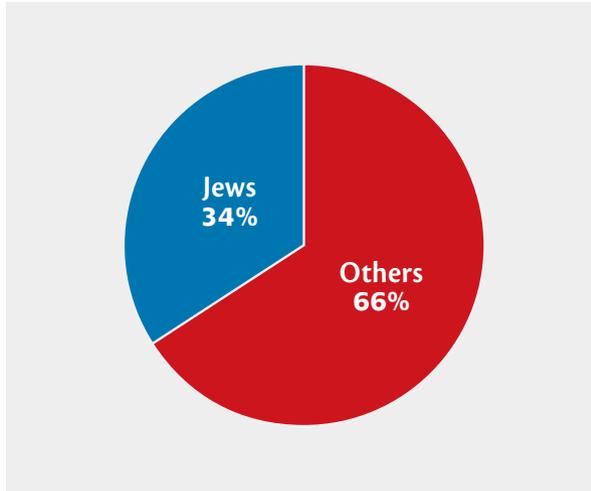
**Figure 1 – Percentage of Jewish Nobel Prize Laureates**



**Figure 2 – Percentage of Jewish Turing Award Recipients**



**Figure 3 – Percentage of Jewish Wolf Prize Laureates**



winners (39.6 percent); physics, 26 winners (45.6 percent); medicine, 23 winners (roughly 41 percent); mathematics, 20 winners (35.7 percent); agriculture, 6 winners (roughly 12 percent); the arts, 12 winners (26.6).

**All this while the total number of Jews in the world, as of 2015, is estimated to be about 14.3 million people, which is only 0.2 percent of the world’s population.**

**Table 1 – Participation in Education – American Jews<sup>3</sup>**

	Pew, 2013	NJPS, 2000-01	NJPS, 1990	NJPS, 1971
Advanced degrees – Masters and above	28% (10%)	25% (6%)	26.4% (8.7%)	19%
Bachelor’s degree	30% (19%)		26.7% (11.8%)	14.7%
Studied or studying in an academic framework, not yet graduated (and no other degree)	25% (29%)		19.3% (17.3%)	19.9%
High school or less	17% (42%)		27% (62%)	46.4%

Data regarding American Jews, the largest Jewish community outside of Israel, also indicate an over-representation of Jews in higher education. It's important to point out that, according to the Duncan Index of Dissimilarity, the advantage of Jews over the rest of the population declined during the period between 1990 and 2013 (from 34.6 to 29 percent). This means that in 1990, 34.6 percent of non-Jews had to acquire further education to match the Jewish educational profile; in 2013, this number decreased to only 29 percent. The advantage eroded primarily at the high school level and in bachelor's degree recipients. For master's degrees and higher, the level of achievement of Jews and non-Jews is quite similar.

The Jewish People Policy Institute, aware of the great importance of science and education in Jewish culture and the impressive achievements of the Jewish people throughout history, is undertaking a wide-scale project to examine long-term trends in education both in Israel and among Jews the world over. Our intention is to formulate a suitable methodology to examine these trends and, if necessary, propose policies to help improve the state of education.

## **The state of education in Israel**

This paper is based primarily on findings from a broad range of official reports published during the past year, by the OECD, Bank of Israel, the Central Bureau of Statistics, and Ministry of Education among others, dealing with various indicators relating to education in Israel and their current and potential future ramifications.

The current analysis will focus only on the state of education in Israel, but future JPPI analyses will encompass other aspects that will help us understand the state of education among the Jewish people worldwide.

The first indicator people tend to rely on when attempting to assess the state of education in Israel is outcomes. However, we cannot understand Israel's schooling and education systems merely by looking at student achievement on international or internal Israeli examinations. These offer only a partial view of a much larger picture. In order for a comprehensive index to provide a global view for priorities and policy, we must examine three principal types of data: inputs, outputs, and indirect indices (see appendix table).

We should take note of the fact that the data provide us with a picture not only regarding this specific point in time, but also a three-dimensional view:

1. State of the Israeli education system at a specific point in time;
2. State of the Israeli education system from a historical perspective – a change in the situation compared with previous years;
3. An international comparison – the state of the Israeli education system compared to other nations (mainly OECD nations). This portrait can be examined at a specific point in time and/or over time.

Before we begin our analysis it is important to emphasize that although the State of Israel is the nation of the Jewish people, Israel's population is mixed and also includes other religious and ethnic

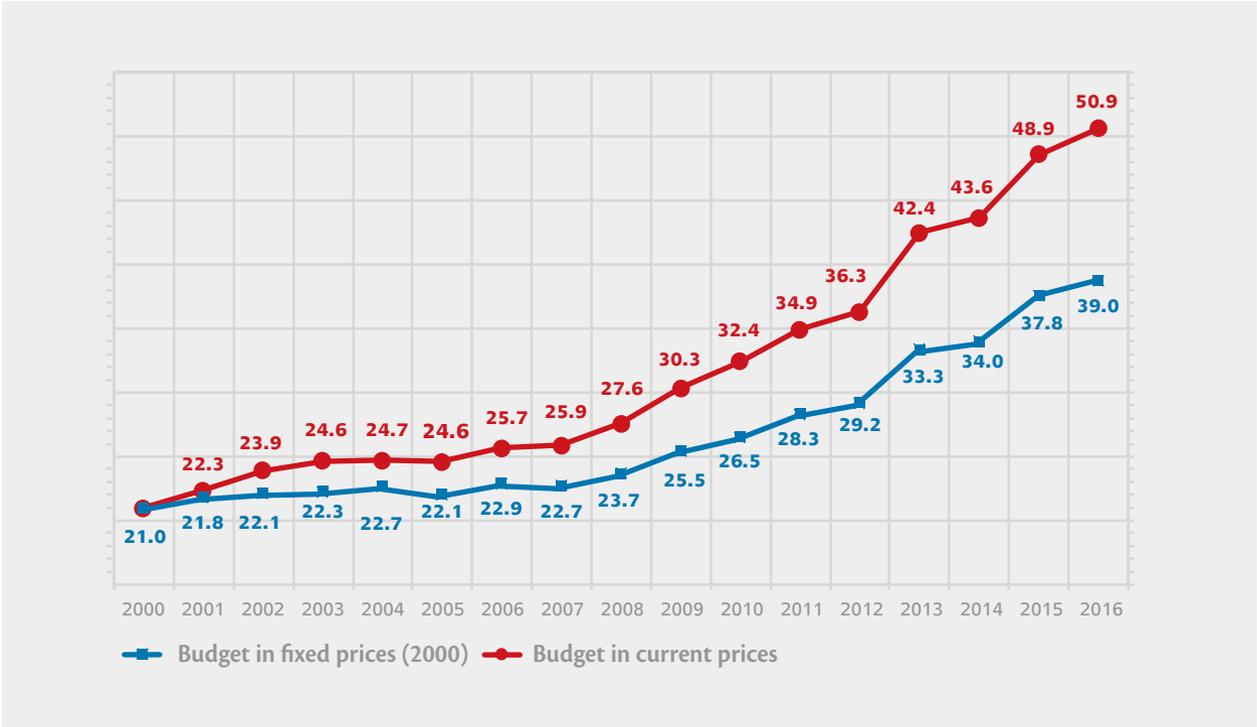
groups. The data presented below, particularly international data, refer mainly to all pupils in Israel and not just the Jewish population.

### Inputs Indices

The picture that emerges from the data is not unequivocal. It is apparent that in recent years

greater efforts and resources have been expended to improve education in Israel. By and large, the input indices (except for annual expenditure per pupil in secondary schools, and teaching hours in primary schools, which are both declining, and the latter is declining on average in other OECD countries as well), indicate an upward trend.

**Figure 4 – Ministry of Education budget for 2000-2016 (not including development budget), fixed and current costs (in NIS billions)**



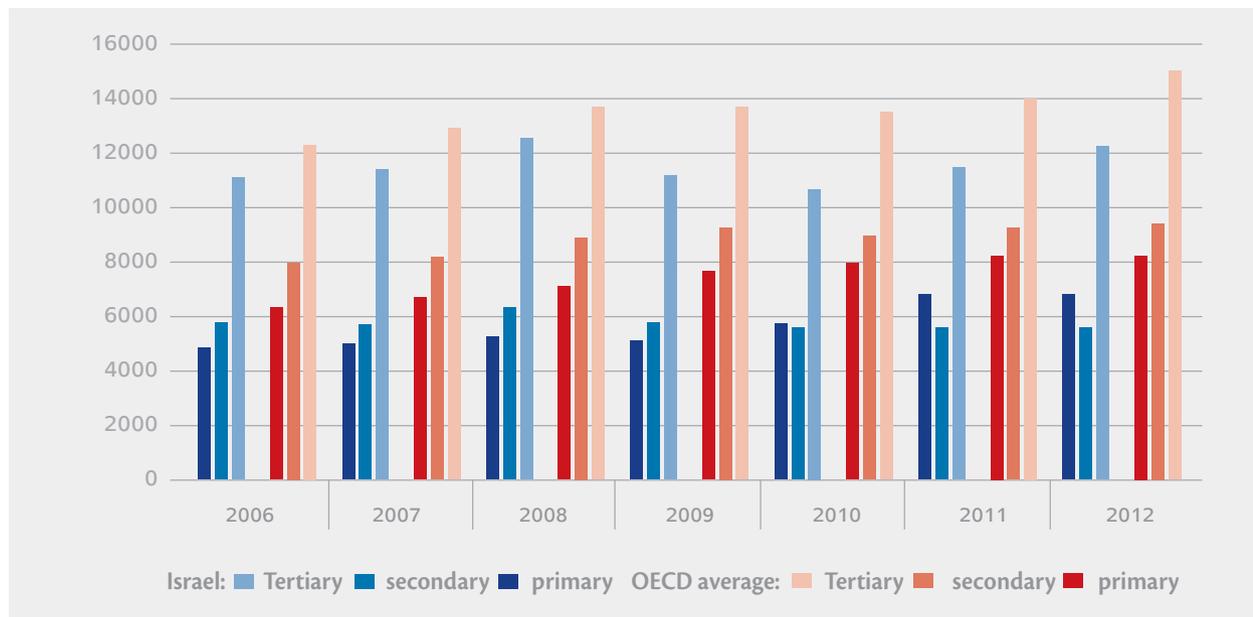
From: Economic data on the education system 2015-2016, Ministry of Education (Hebrew)<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, in recent years the Ministry of Education's budget has increased significantly, both in terms of fixed costs and as a percentage of GDP.

During the past six years notable reforms and processes have been implemented that have increased the budget of the Education Ministry, including "Ofek Hadash" (New Horizon), the addition of teaching hours in primary and lower secondary education, as part of the strategic plan to improve achievements, the school climate and more.<sup>5</sup> According to details on expenditure as seen in Education Ministry data, most of the investment is in teaching personnel. Wage expenditures constitute some 90 percent of the ministry's budget, which includes teacher salaries (72.4 percent), wages for workers hired by municipalities, wages for ministry personnel, and wages for corporate employees (17.1 percent).

Between 2006 and 2012, Israel increased its per pupil education expenditure (not including higher education) by 38 percent, a rate that is significantly higher than the OECD average, which stands at 21 percent. It appears, therefore, that the investment data show an encouraging picture. But the international data, which give us another perspective on the figures, suggest the increase in investment for some indicators (for example, national expenditure per pupil) is not unique to Israel, and in many cases can be seen in other OECD countries as well. Furthermore, there are explanations for the fact that, in some cases, Israel is unable to close the gap with the OECD average. One of these explanations is the increase in the number of pupils enrolled in the education system, which is considerably higher than in other Western countries. Either way, the final result is that

**Figure 5 – Annual expenditure per pupil in U.S. dollars, by stage of education, for all services**



Source: OECD data, "Education at a Glance", Reports from 2009-2015, table B1.1a

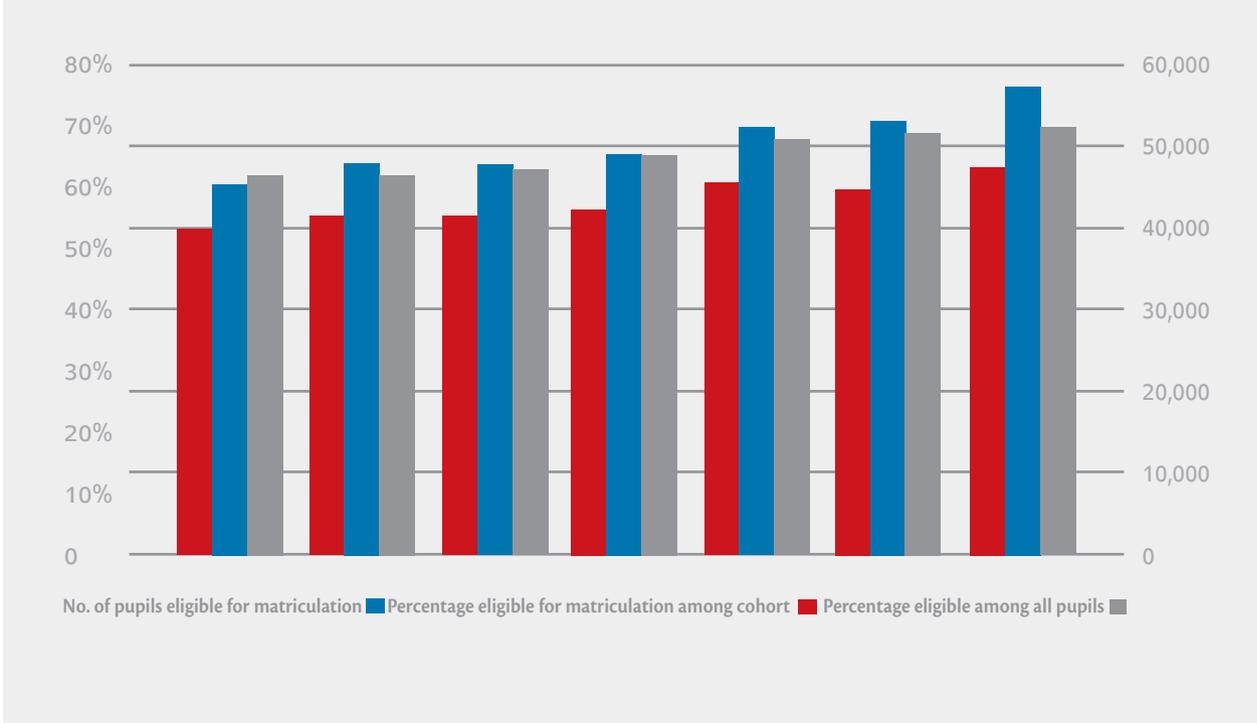
despite the improvement and increased spending, Israel remains below the OECD average for many indicators.

### Output indices

In terms of outputs the picture is more complicated. As shown in the appendix, during the past decade Israeli pupils have been able to improve their scores in all most all areas on international tests (mathematics, science and reading). But, here too, looking only at the trend in Israel gives an erroneous impression. The average score of Israeli students did, in fact, increase in recent years, but except in the case of reading skills

(PISA and PIRLS tests) Israel has not improved its relative international standing. Furthermore, an exact analysis of the data on gaps between pupils in the top decile and those in the bottom decile for achievement on international tests indicates a worrisome trend in the three key subjects – math, science, and reading. While scores have risen for groups at both ends of the scale (Math – from 310 to 328 in the bottom decile, and from 581 to 603 in the top decile; Science – from 314 to 328 in the bottom decile, and from 590 to 608 in the top decile; Reading – from 322 to 329 in the bottom decile, and from 611 to 624 in the top decile) as reflected in the general rise of scores in all three subjects, we can see that the

**Figure 6 – Data on matriculation eligibility among Jewish pupils 2008-09 to 2014-15 (including ultra-Orthodox)**



Source: Ministry of Education data, “Educational Picture” project, August 2016

greatest improvement is in the higher group and the gaps between the groups continue to widen.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to international tests, which do not differentiate between different ethnic groups in the population, the Growth and Effectiveness Measures for Schools (GEMS examinations) provide us with a specific depiction of the education system in Hebrew-speaking schools. Once again the data indicate a mixed trend with fluctuations, although for most of the exams we can see a general rise between 2009 and 2015. Another variable that can give us a key view of the success of Israel's education system from a multi-year perspective are figures that relate to matriculation eligibility. According to data from the Education Ministry published as part of the "Educational Picture" project, matriculation eligibility among Jewish pupils has been on the rise in recent years – both in terms of actual numbers and in terms of the percentage of eligible pupils within the age cohort and among all students.

When looking at eligibility data pertaining only to the ultra-Orthodox population, the picture is mixed. While the absolute number of those eligible for matriculation has increased (from 1,340 pupils in 2008-09 to 1,880 in 2014-15) and the percentage of those eligible among the age cohort has gone up (from 8.6 percent in 2008-09 to 10.2 percent in 2014-15), the percentage of those eligible for matriculation among the group of pupils participating in the formal education system decreased (from 22.3 percent in 2008-09 to 18.6 percent in 2014-15). This decline, parallel with the rise in pupils eligible for matriculation

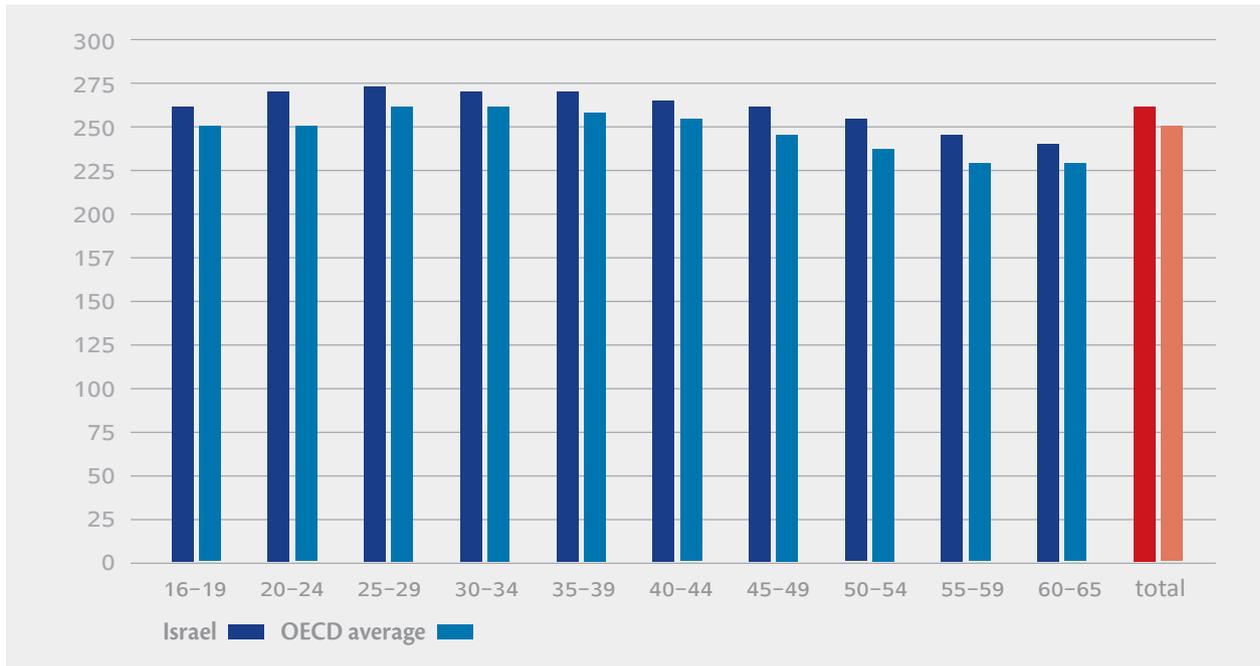
in the general education system, indicates that the gaps between pupils in the education system have widened. The increase in the number of pupils eligible for matriculation applies to the general population, while in the ultra-Orthodox population, despite the fact that the number continues to rise, fewer students are graduating with a matriculation certificate.

These gaps are substantial not only in regard to matriculation eligibility, but also in matriculation examination topics and levels. The Ministry of Education published data (on August 29, 2016) indicate substantial differences between the percentage of matriculation eligibility at the 5-point level (the highest level) in Mathematics and English in different populations in Israel. Within the Jewish population, this difference is most conspicuous between the ultra-Orthodox population and the rest of the population.

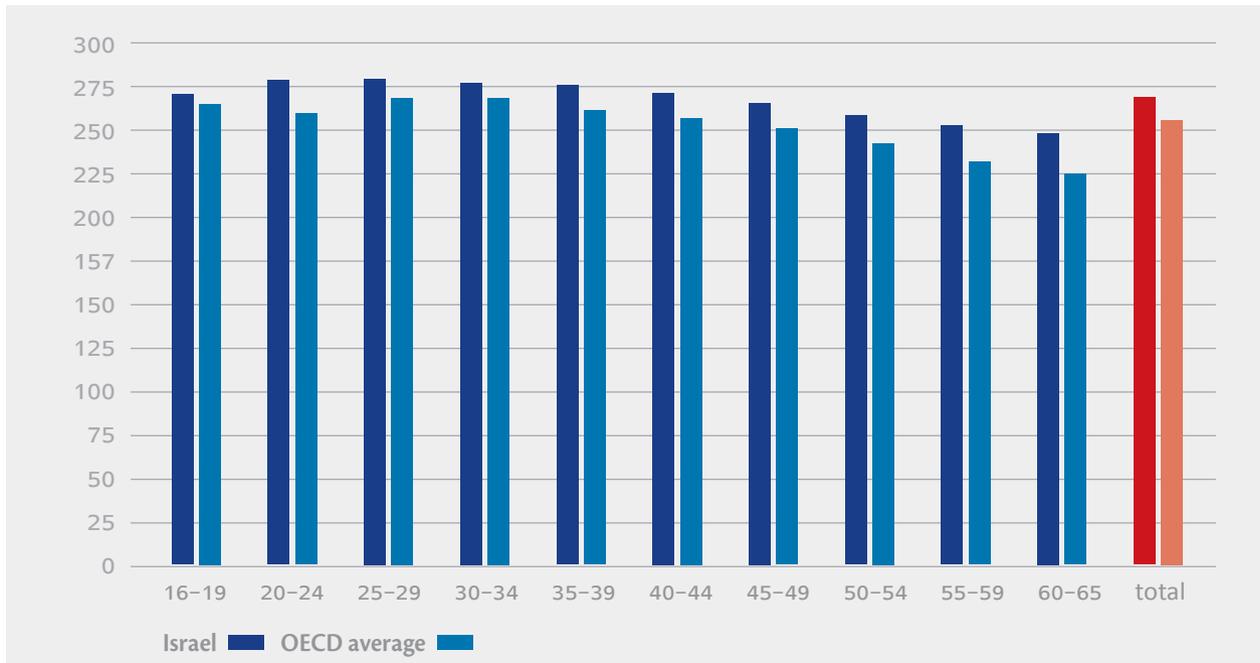
## Indirect indices (outcome indices)

The third group of indices we want to address are indirect indices, or outcome indices, which deal mainly with the state of the adult population that has been through the education system and has integrated (or not) into the job market. A special OECD report published in June 2016 presents important data regarding people aged 16-65 with reference to several prominent indicators, among which are literacy (reading skills), numeracy (mathematical computation skills), and problem solving ability in a computerized technological environment.

**Figure 7 – Gaps in numeracy skills, by age group**



**Figure 8 – Gaps in literacy skills, by age group**



Source: Analysis of data taken from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), 2012

The report findings indicate that Israel is below the OECD average on all three indices. Additionally, in this sphere as well, Israel comes up short with respect to skill level gaps. In literacy, the gap in points between the group that had the highest scores and the group with the lowest score is 73.9 points (the average of OECD countries is 61.7 points), and ranks second only to Singapore (77 points). The percentage of those at skills Level 1 or below is 27 percent. For numeracy the data is similar, and here, too, the gaps in Israel are among the widest measured, 83 points, while the gaps in Singapore are only slightly higher at 88 points. Once again, the percentage of participants at Level 1 or below (the lowest levels of numeracy skills) is nearly 30 percent.

Data from the report point to another important trend. Despite the fact that the scores achieved by Israelis in all age cohorts were lower than the OECD average, the group of young adults aged 25-34 scored closest to the OECD average among comparable age groups. On numeracy tests this cohort's gap was about 10 points, while the age cohorts with the highest gaps were ages 20-24 and ages 55-59 (where the gaps were 21 points).

The smallest gap in literacy were among those aged 16-19 (7 points), while the largest gap was found among those aged 60-65 (23 points). The general trend, with the exception of adults aged 20-24 and adults aged 25-29, indicates that the gap widens the higher in age you go. When looking at literacy skills and numeracy skills, for adults aged 20-24 there is a relatively wide gap of 17 points compared with similar OECD groups.

When looking at skills relating to problem solving in a technology-rich environment, 32.7 percent of Israel's adult population is not sufficiently skilled to solve problems in a computerized setting. This rate is higher than the OECD average (28.9 percent). Nonetheless, the percentage of Israeli adults at the highest level of problem solving in a computerized environment (6.4 percent) is higher than the OECD average (5.4 percent).

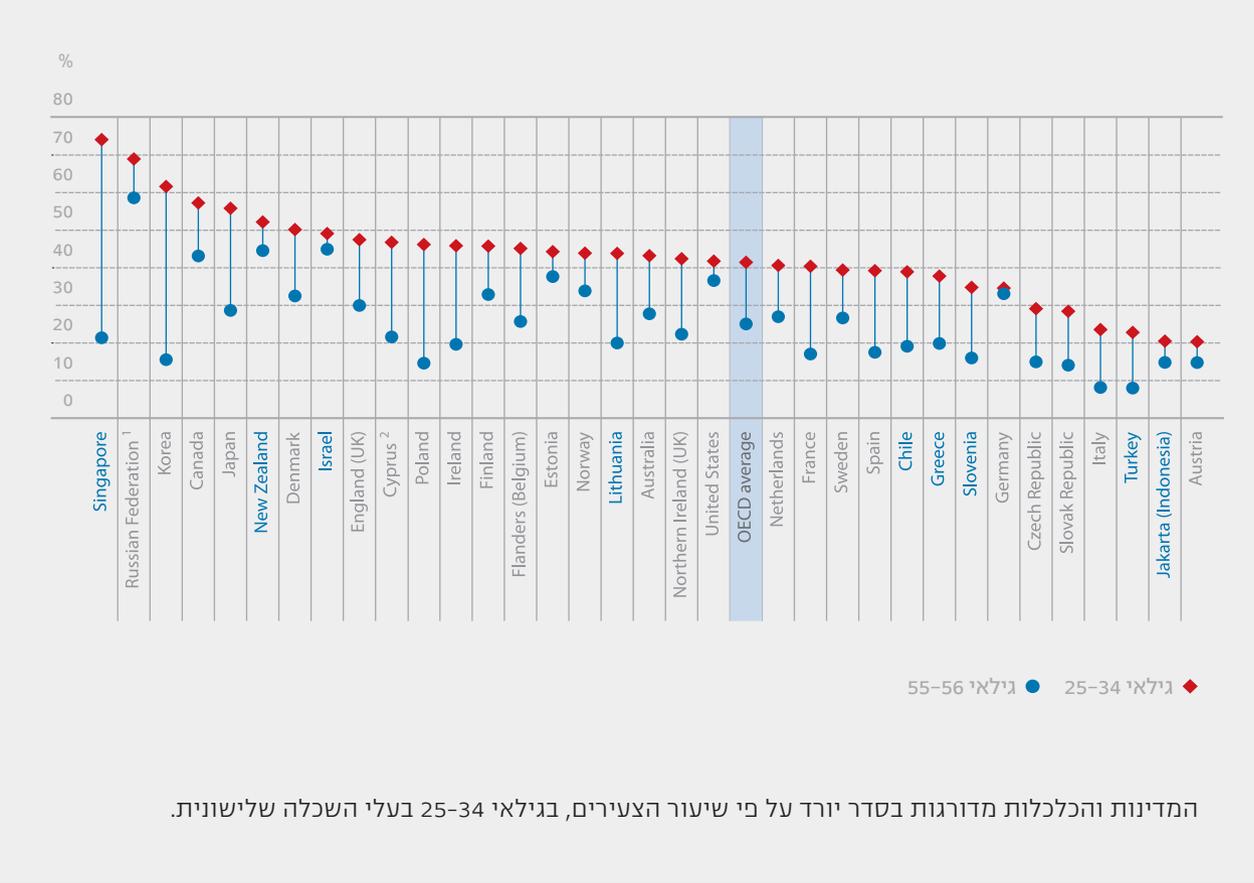
Another important index deals with the percentage of the population with tertiary education, that is, the number of people who have studied and/or are studying in post-secondary educational frameworks. The data for 2015 point to the fact that the rate of participation in higher education in Israel is among the highest in the world, and Israel is on the list of the ten leading countries. According to data found in the appendix, we can see that the proportion of people with advanced degrees is on the rise.

The last point in the indirect indices was added after this paper was completed. Two Israeli delegations returned from the International Mathematical Olympiad and the International Physics Olympiad with medals.

There were 109 countries participating in the International Mathematical Olympiad. The six Israeli pupils took six medals (three silver, three bronze), and came in 22nd place in the overall ranking. This is an increase of 18 places from Israel's ranking (40) the previous year.

Eighty-seven countries took part in the International Physics Olympiad. Five representatives from the Israeli team took home

Figure 9 – Percentage of population with tertiary (post-secondary) education, by age cohort



Source: Survey of Adult Skills (PIACC), 2012

four medals (three silver and one bronze), and an honorable mention. This achievement places the team in 19th place, and third among Western countries

### State of Education in Israel – Comprehensive index

As previously noted, when examining a wide range of data utilized to indicate the state of education

in Israel, the result is mixed. But there are several important trends that can and should be noted:

1. As of this writing, **there are significant gaps between the input indices, which have shown a welcome increase in recent years, and the output indices** – both the direct and indirect indices – which present a mixed picture – an increase in certain areas and a decrease or inconsistent changes in others. We can offer a broad range of arguments to explain these findings, from

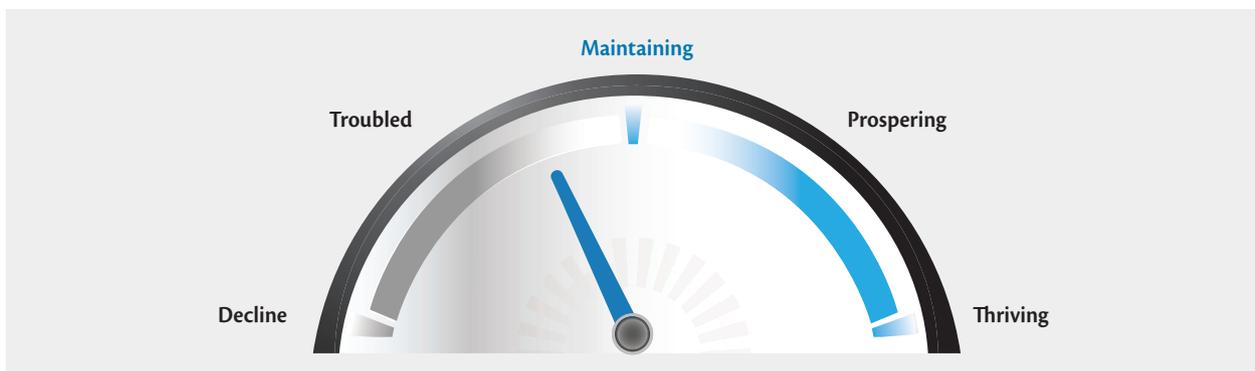
demographic trends to education investment choices, to educational policy, to the role of the establishment, to the argument raised in the research literature regarding the limited resources for improving the state of education. Each one of these arguments requires a deep and detailed investigation of the degree to which it would likely have an impact in Israel's unique case. Another explanation, one which no one disputes and that deserves the reader's attention, is the period of time it takes investments in the policy sphere in general, and the sphere of educational policy in particular, to bear fruit. Since the time frame is usually not immediate, the examination of investment impact can only occur a few years later;

2. Although the situation in Israel has improved, sometimes significantly so in certain parameters, for most of the indicators Israel is still below the OECD average; sometimes Israel's ranking is problematic and outcomes are considerably lower than those of many other countries. Some of the low scores are due to a difficult starting point, while others are apparently related to policy measures, which, even if they succeed in improving pupil

scores, are not actually sufficient to bring about the desired change.

3. Further to the previous paragraph, the most worrisome trend that can be seen from a wide spectrum of indices in all three spheres – input, output, and results – relates to gaps, which are growing ever-wider, between different population groups. The data presented here refer primarily to gaps between various population deciles, but the detailed indications presented by the OECD represent the gaps in a broad range of cross-sections, including ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, and geographical.

Based on the methodology JPPI has developed in recent years for identifying and integrating various indicators for each of the five dimensions (see this volume's Integrated Net Assessment chapter) influencing the interests of the Jewish people, we offer a sphere of education gauge (for now, in Israel only). The comprehensive index is based on three principal trends arising from a review of the data: Inputs versus outputs; Israel's importance in the international arena (outputs and results); and gaps between the top and bottom deciles. Despite the improvement in Israel's relative standing in



various individual indices, in each one of these three spheres Israel's relative situation is troubling. Therefore, it was decided to place the arrow slightly on the gauge's negative side, but the situation seems to be in the process of improving.

Parameter	Source	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2009	2006	Trend
<b>Investment indices (inputs)</b>									
Ministry of Education budget (NIS billions)	Economic Data on the Education System, 2015-2016	48.9			36.3	34.9		25.7	
National Expenditure on Education (as percentage of GDP)	Central Bureau of Statistics, Table A, National Education Expenditure			7.9 <sup>3</sup>	7.8	7.6	7.5	7%	
Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs <sup>4</sup> for GDP)-Primary	Education at a Glance (OECD) <sup>5</sup>			No data	(8247) 6931	(8296) 6823	(7719) 5202	(6437) 4923	
Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP)-Secondary	Education at Glance (OECD)				5689 (9518)	(9280) 5712	(9312) 5842	(8006) 5858	

Parameter	Source	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2009	2006	Trend
Average class size (primary education)	Education at Glance (OECD)			(21) 27	(21) 27	(21.2) 27.3	(21.4) 27.4	(21.5) 27.5	
Average class size (lower secondary education)	Education at Glance (OECD)			(24) 28	(24) 28	(23.3) 28.7	(23.7) 32.2	(24.0) 32.8	
Net teaching time in hours – primary	Education at Glance (OECD)			840 (772)	838 (782)	842 (790)	778 (779)	(812) 1025	
Net teaching time in hours –lower secondary education	Education at Glance (OECD)			644 (694)	629 (694)	614 (709)	589 (701)	(717) 788	
Net teaching time in hours –upper secondary education	Education at Glance (OECD)			570 (643)	558 (655)	521 (664)	524 (656)	(667) 665	
Teachers participation in mentoring programs (percentage of teachers who participated in professional development activities in the 12 months preceding the study)	TALIS – 2013	-----		91.1 (88.4) 16th and 17th place <sup>6</sup>	----- ---	----- ---	Israel did not partici- pate	----- ---	

Parameter	Source	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2009	2006	Trend
School autonomy – dismissing or suspending of teachers from employment (Hebrew-speaking schools)	TALIS – 2013 Table 2.24 (Hebrew Report-RAMA)			90% (76%) <sup>7</sup>					
Output indices									
Mean mathematics performance in PISA	PISA reports – 2006, 2009, 2012	Results not yet published		----- ---	466 (494) 40th place	----- ---	447 (496) 41st place	442 (494) 39	
Mean score variation in students' performance in mathematics-10th vs. 90th percentiles-PISA	PISA 2009, 2012 – What Students Know and Can Do.				275 (255)		271 (253)		
TIMSS mathematics achievement	TIMSS 2011	-----		----- ---	----- ---	516 (500) <sup>8</sup> 7th place	-----		
Mean science performance in PISA	PISA reports – 2006, 2009, 2012	Results not yet published		----- ---	470 (501) 41st place	----- ---	Average grades – 455 (501) 41st place	454 (498) 39th place	

Parameter	Source	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2009	2006	Trend
Mean score variation in students' performance in science- 10th vs. 90th percentiles- PISA	PISA 2009, 2012 – What Students Know and Can Do.				280 (252) Placed 1/64		276 (259)		
TIMSS science achievement	TIMSS 2011	-----		----- ---	----- ---	516 (477)  13th place			
Mean reading performance in PISA	PISA reports – 2006, 2009, 2012	Results not yet published		----- ---	486 (496)  33rd place	----- ---	474 (494)  37th place	439 (489)  40th place	
Mean score variation in students' performance in reading- 10th vs. 90th percentiles- PISA	PISA 2009, 2012 – "What Students Know and Can Do."				295 (251)  Placed 2/64		289 (252)		
PIRLS reading achievement	Trends in the Developments of the Education System, Taub Center, Policy Paper No. 2014.13					541 (512)  12th place		512  18th place	
Performance in problem solving	PISA 2012				454  Placed 34/42				

Parameter	Source	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2009	2006	Trend
Mean score variation in students' performance in problem solving- 10th vs. 90th percentiles- PISA	PISA 2012				320 points placed 1/42				
performance in financial literacy (PISA)	PISA 2012	Results not yet published	----- ---	----- ---	476 (526) placed 14/16	----- ---	-----		
Achievement in Hebrew – Grade 5 (GEMS) Hebrew speakers	GEMS 2014-15 – achievement tests	537		532	539	528	513		
Achievement in Hebrew – Grade 8 (GEMS)	GEMS 2014-15 – achievement tests	540		537	539	551	535		
Achievement in English – Grade 5 – Hebrew speakers (GEMS)	GEMS 2014-15 – achievement tests	530		542	545	532	517		
Achievement in English – Grade 8 – Hebrew speakers (GEMS)	GEMS 2014-15 – achievement tests	531		537	530	537	531		

Parameter	Source	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2009	2006	Trend
Achievement in mathematics – Grade 5 – Hebrew speakers (GEMS)	GEMS 2014-15 – achievement tests	559		562	556	558	526		
Achievement in mathematics – Grade 8 – Hebrew speakers (GEMS)	GEMS 2014-15 – achievement tests	548		533	514	532	520		
Achievement in science and technology – Grade 8 – Hebrew speakers (GEMS)	GEMS 2014-15 – achievement tests	567		573	549	547	525		
Percentage of pupils eligible for matriculation from the age cohort – Jews including ultra-Orthodox	Educational Picture – data on matriculation eligibility, 2015	62.4%	58.7%	59.8%	55.3%	54.5%	52.2%		
Indirect indices – outcomes		2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2009	2006	
Literacy proficiency (Hebrew) among adults(16-65)	Skills Matter, The Survey of Adult Skills (PIACC) – OECD	255 (268)							

Parameter	Source	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2009	2006	Trend
The share of adults proficient at or below Level 1 in literacy	Skills Matter, The Survey of Adult Skills (PIACC) – OECD	27% (18.9%)							
Numeracy proficiency among adults (16-65)	Skills Matter, The Survey of Adult Skills (PIACC) – OECD	251 (263)							
The share of adults proficient at or below Level 1 in numeracy	Skills Matter, The Survey of Adult Skills (PIACC) – OECD	30.9% (22.7%)							
Percentage of adults (25-64) who have attained at least upper secondary education	OECD – Education at a Glance		85% (76%)		85% (75%)	83% (75%)	81% (71%)	80% (71%)	

## Endnotes

1 Thus last June, in the wake of the report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), newspaper headlines screamed that “Israelis are not as smart as citizens of developed countries (Dattel, Lior, June 28, 2016, “The sad facts: Israelis are not as smart as citizens of advanced countries,” The Marker); in July we were given another reminder that the high-tech engine is losing altitude (“The Start Up Nation is Running out of Steam,” The Economist); and more.

2 Eckstein, Zvi, Maristella Botticini (2012). The chosen

few – How education shaped Jewish history, 70-1492. Tel Aviv University, Haim Rubin Publications, pp. 24-31, 103-111.

3 Data are for American Jews; figures in parentheses indicate data for general USA population.

4 [http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/MinhalCalcala/uvdot\\_venetunim\\_kalkali\\_2015\\_2016.pdf](http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/MinhalCalcala/uvdot_venetunim_kalkali_2015_2016.pdf)

5 Ibid.

6 OECD Reports, Education at a Glance. Data are summarized in the appendix.

7 National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education (RAMA), November 2015: GEMS 2014-15: Growth and Effectiveness Measures for Schools, Part I – achievement examinations. Data are present in the Appendix.

8 Ministry of Education website, “The Educational Picture for secondary schools,” about the educational picture, data on matriculation eligibility for 2010-11, 2015 (available in August 2016).

<http://edu.gov.il/special/ExcellenceFramework/about/Pages/bagruyot.aspx>

9 For further reading (in Hebrew):

[Http://haaretz.co.il/news/education/.remium-1.3052575](http://haaretz.co.il/news/education/.remium-1.3052575)

[Http://haaretz.co.il/news/education/.remium-1.3053105](http://haaretz.co.il/news/education/.remium-1.3053105)

10 To read the key points of the report:

OECD, (28 June, 2016), Skills Matter: Further Results From the Survey of Adult Skills, Israel- Key Findings <<http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills-Matter-Israel.pdf>>

To read the full report:

OECD, (June, 2016), OECD Skills Studies – Skill Matter, Further Results from the Survey of Adult Skills [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/skills-matter\\_9789264258051-en#.V6gRovkrKUK#page1](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/skills-matter_9789264258051-en#.V6gRovkrKUK#page1)

11 Results of the survey are measured on a scale of 500 points, and the higher the score the higher the level of skills. In order to establish a basis for comparison, during the second stage the scale is divided into different skill levels. For literacy and numeracy skills the scores were divided into six skill levels: Below Level 1 is the lowest level and Level 5 is the highest level. Regarding problem-solving in a technology-rich environment, scores were grouped into four levels, where below Level 1 is the lowest level and Level 3 is the highest level. OECD, 2016, Skills Matter- Further Results from the Survey of Adult Skills, p. 21 <http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/>

[oecd/education/skills-matter\\_9789264258051-en#.V7aVDfkrKUK#page23](http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-matter_9789264258051-en#.V7aVDfkrKUK#page23)

12 The definition of problem-solving skills in a technology-rich environment refers to “using digital technology, networks and media to acquire and evaluate information, communicate with others and to perform various tasks.” The test focuses on “the ability to solve problems for personal, work or civic purposes by setting appropriate goals and plans while accessing and using information through computers and the Internet.” OECD, 2016, Skills Matter – Further results from the Survey of Adult Skills, p. 53.

13 For further reading (Hebrew): Hayadan (July 19, 2016), “Double achievement for Israel in two science Olympiads: Six medals in mathematics, five in physics.” <http://www.hayadan.org.il/11-medls-to-israel-in-2-scientific-olympics-1907163>

14 The data relates to Israel; data in parentheses are OECD averages (unless indicated otherwise). When information is provided Israel’s ranking compared to other OECD countries is also noted.

15 Data not final.

16 Purchasing Power Parity

17 Data for 2013 are taken from the OECD report for 2015. In this year they changed the classification method of the various educational institutions (ISCED) so that the comparison between different countries was more reliable; thus, there may be slight changes between the data for 2013, when the new method went into effect, and previous years. In this table the changes are more relevant for higher education.

18 Israel shared the 16th and 17th places with Iceland, where the percentage also stands at 91.1.

19 The data refer to the percentage of teachers in Grades 7-9 for whom principals report that the school has a major responsibility with regard to teacher dismissal. Regarding data from Israel, according to the RAMA report

from February 2015: TALIS 2013 – An Israeli Perspective, this figure is surprising considering the fact that officially the school does not have the authority to hire or fire its teachers.

20 This score is the median and not the average. The average is not a reliable parameter due to the high percentage of students whose score is too low to assess.



# **PART 3**

## **Feature Articles**



# Orthodox Jews in the United States

## Introduction

The 2013 survey by the Pew Research Center reported that Orthodox Jews make up about 10 percent of the estimated 5.3 million Jewish adults (ages 18 and older) in the United States, an increase of 2 percent since a similar study was done ten years earlier.<sup>1</sup> Although the population of adult Orthodox Jews is yet a small minority of the U.S. Jewish population, and its overall growth has been limited, a dramatic change is underway, the result of soaring Orthodox birthrates and a steady decline in the non-Orthodox Jewish population. Roughly a quarter of Orthodox Jewish adults are between the ages of 18 and 29, compared with 17 percent of Reform Jews and 13 percent of Conservative Jews, and Orthodox Jews between 40

and 59 had an average of 4.1 children, compared with an average of 1.7 for other U.S. Jews in that age group.<sup>2</sup> A 2012 study of the New York area Jewish community by the UJA-Federation of New York confirms this trend. From 1991 to 2011, the fraction of Jewish households in the New York area that are Orthodox rose from 13 to 20 percent, and from 2002 to 2011, the fraction of the total Jewish population that are Orthodox grew from 27 to 32 percent. Of all Jewish children living in the area in 2011, 64 percent lived in Orthodox households.<sup>3</sup>

The growth of the Orthodox population as a percentage of the U.S. Jewish population potentially disrupts settled conceptions of the overall character of U.S. Jewry. The Pew study

observed that Orthodox Jews more closely resemble white evangelical Protestants than they do other Jews with respect to the importance of religion in their lives and the belief that God gave Israel to the Jewish people. The study added

**The UJA-Federation noted in its report the challenge it faces as its traditional base of support declines and the Orthodox community grows, for the large and growing insular and illiberal groups within the Orthodox community historically have not shown a “commitment to communitywide Jewish philanthropy and collective responsibility”**

that Orthodox Jews are more conservative socially and politically than other Jews: they lean Republican, and they are more likely to say that homosexuality should be discouraged.<sup>4</sup> The reality though, is somewhat more complex, as the Orthodox Jewish population does not align neatly with white evangelicals and Orthodox Jews are not standard Republicans. Large groups of Orthodox Jews support and lobby for welfare and other government assistance programs, and are just as likely, or even more so, to vote Democratic in local and state races than

Republican. Even so, the differences between the Orthodox population and the non-Orthodox American Jewish population are stark.

The changing profile of the U.S. Jewish population

is an area of concern for communal organizations serving the broader Jewish community. The UJA-Federation noted in its report the challenge it faces as its traditional base of support declines and the Orthodox community grows, for the large and growing insular and illiberal groups within the Orthodox community historically have not shown a “commitment to community-wide Jewish philanthropy and collective responsibility.”<sup>5</sup> The characteristic here identified – an alleged overly narrow conception of community and collective responsibility – is only one aspect of the deep ideological divide between such organizations as the UJA-Federation and the illiberal Orthodox groups that will need to be confronted as the Orthodox share of the American Jewish population grows.

This essay is composed of two parts. The first provides an overview of the major sectors and sub-groups within American Orthodox Judaism. The American Orthodox population is highly diverse, a fact that is not fully recognized by the major population studies. The second considers the challenges presented by the growth of the illiberal Orthodox streams to mainstream broad-based Jewish organizations. The conclusion will briefly outline the options available to established communal organizations in meeting these challenges.

## **Varieties of Orthodox Judaism**

Both the Pew and the UJA-Federation studies divide the Orthodox population into two main sectors, Modern Orthodox and Haredi, and then

further divide the Haredi sector into two sub-groups, Hasidic and Yeshivish. According to Pew, the Haredi community accounts for 62 percent of the Orthodox population, and the Modern Orthodox community accounts for 31 percent.<sup>6</sup> According to the UJA-Federation study, in the New York area, Hasidim account for 48 percent of the Orthodox population, the Yeshivish community accounts for 20 percent and the Modern Orthodox community accounts for 32 percent.<sup>7</sup>

However, neither of the studies' final reports released give adequate attention to the significant divisions within the Hasidic sub-group, nor acknowledges the existence of "Heimish" Jews who straddle the Hasidic and Yeshivish communities and cannot be solely identified with one or the other. Furthermore, while the broad categorization of Orthodox Jews used by Pew and the UJA-Federation may be valid for its Ashkenazic constituents, and indeed corresponds to categories and labels used by members of this population, it fails to give independent significance to the Sephardic community, a community that is sufficiently distinct to merit separate consideration. Another group that does not fit the Pew and UJA-Federation categorization is Chabad/Lubavitch, a Hasidic group that is very different from other Hasidic and other Orthodox groups, almost constituting a world unto itself. The incomplete recognition of the diversity of the Orthodox population is reflected in the characterization of Orthodox Judaism in the survey questionnaire used by Pew as a "denomination," comparable to Reform and Conservative.<sup>8</sup> Unlike

the Reform and Conservative movements, there are no unifying institutional structures of either a doctrinal or social nature for the many and varied communities considered Orthodox.

The following is an abbreviated "field guide" to these major sub-groups, focusing on salient aspects of their respective social life and worldview.

**The Hasidic Community.** The American Hasidic community is largely the creation of refugees who came to America during and shortly after the Second World War and who settled, for the most part, in New York City.

Led by rabbinic leaders, known as "Rebbes," who headed or descended from heads of various Hasidic courts in pre-War Eastern Europe, these remnants of the large and diverse Hasidic communities of Hungary

and Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe that were destroyed in the Holocaust, passionately labored to rebuild, replenish, and perpetuate the Hasidic communities that had been lost. Seven decades later, it can be said that their mission has met with remarkable success. There are now 20 to 30 flourishing Hasidic communities of significant size in America today. The largest group is the Satmar, with large enclaves in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and Kiryas Joel, an all-Satmar town in upstate New York.<sup>9</sup>

The determination to perpetuate the Hasidic pre-War way of life in America affects all aspects of

**The largest group is the Satmar, out of the 20 – 30 Hasidic communities in America.**

Hasidic life. The most striking feature of Hasidic life to the outside observer is dress and appearance. Each community has its own distinctive form of dress for its male members that replicate the form of dress worn by males of the community in pre-War Europe. Female dress generally is less distinctive as between the different groups; all maintain stringent modesty requirements, including the covering or shaving of married women's natural head hair.

The different Hasidic communities, if they are of sufficient size, have their own educational systems, including *yeshivas* and *kollels* for men and often schools for girls and young women, as well as *shuls* or *shtiebelach*, and social service organizations, all of which are usually under the control and direction of the Rebbe.

Hasidic boys and young men receive little secular education. The near-exclusive focus of their schools and yeshivas, where students spend long hours, six days a week with little vacation, is the study of Torah, with Talmud constituting the major preoccupation from the fifth or sixth grade onward. Hasidic girls and young women receive a relatively greater amount of secular education since Hasidim do not believe that women have a religious obligation to study Torah.

A consequence of the educational curriculum for Hasidic young men is that they do not develop basic English language skills. Yiddish is the native language of Hasidim; it is the language in which they conduct their daily lives, and it is the medium of instruction in their schools and yeshivas. Hasidic men generally have limited ability to read or write English, and the English

that they do speak is a pidgin commonly referred to as "Yinglish" – a heavily accented English that is inflected with Yiddish words and grammar. Hasidic females, on the other hand, have far better English language skills as a result of the inclusion of secular studies in their education. Hasidic young men face considerable barriers if they wish to pursue a college degree or technical certification, while the young women have more options. There are college degree and certification programs at such Orthodox institutions as Touro University and elsewhere that are geared toward Hasidic students, enabling them to be trained in such fields as computer science, accounting, business administration, and healthcare.

Hasidim marry at a young age, typically in their late teens, or early twenties at the latest. Procreation begins immediately upon marriage (barring fertility issues), and large families are the result – it is not uncommon for Hasidic families to have a dozen or more children. According to the UJA-Federation study, the mean number of children for Hasidic women ages 35-44 in the New York area is 5.8 (the number for non-Orthodox women is 1.3).<sup>10</sup>

Early marriage, large families, limited secular education, distinctive dress, lack of English fluency, and consuming religious and family obligations, all make for a life highly insulated from American society. There is a clear recognition, and fear, that assimilation of social patterns and values of non-Jewish America, or any mingling with non-Jews, would cause their carefully constructed and protected community edifice to crumble. On the other hand, Hasidim embrace many aspects of

modern life, such as technology, medical science, fashion, and consumption of novel cuisine and material goods.

**The Yeshivish Community.** The Yeshivish community, also referred to as “Litvish” or “Lithuanian,” traces its lineage to the “*misnagdim*,” led by the Gaon of Vilna and his students, who vehemently opposed the Hasidic movement when it emerged and swiftly gained adherents in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Much has changed since that time. The communities now evidence a great deal of respect for each other and work together in some shared communal bodies and collaborate on issues of mutual concern.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the rapprochement, the communities are yet distinct, each with their own educational and social institutions, and there is limited intermarriage between the two. Fundamentally, the Hasidic community, as discussed above, has defined its mission as replicating and perpetuating its conception of pre-War eastern European Hasidic life, whereas the mission of the American Yeshivish community has been to take a specific educational institution of pre-War Eastern Europe – the yeshiva – and to build communities around this institution devoted to the broadening and deepening of Torah study and the strict observance of Jewish law.

Like the Hasidim, the Yeshivish community has enjoyed great success. There are now hundreds of yeshivas and *kollels* (yeshivas for married students) in America and the community continues to grow at an exceptional rate.

The American Yeshivish community is quite

integrated into American society, but at the same time makes concerted efforts to insulate itself from certain aspects of society it considers dangerous to its religious scruples. The daily dress of male members of the Yeshivish community is not terribly distinctive, generally consisting of dark business suits with white shirts and ties, and a fedora hat. Women dress modestly, but have more flexibility in what they wear as compared to Hasidic women and many wear fashionable clothing. Married women also cover their hair, typically with a stylish custom human hair wig. Men are not immune to fashion – designer suits, watches, and eyeglasses especially are popular vehicles for the expression of personal style.

Although the Yeshivish community is not as prolific as the Hasidic community, it is also highly fecund, with large families of five plus children the norm. According to the UJA-Federation study, the mean number of children for Yeshivish women ages 35-44 in the New York area is 5.0.<sup>12</sup> The marriage age is also different, with the target age for Yeshivish men being 21-23 and for Yeshivish women 19-21. Marriages are usually arranged, typically through a professional matchmaker or sometimes by the parents themselves. Men and women are separated in social venues and the maintenance of standards of modesty, especially on the part of women, is stressed. Socializing among married couples is frowned upon.

The Yeshivish community is far more open to secular studies as compared to the Hasidim. More hours are devoted to secular studies in elementary and high schools, although there are elite high schools for boys that provide little or

no instruction in secular studies. As is the case in the Hasidic community, young women generally receive more instruction in secular studies than do the young men. The major difference between the Yeshivish and the Hasidic communities is that the native language of the Yeshivish community is English. Yiddish is only taught to boys beginning in high school, and women generally are not fluent or conversant in Yiddish.

Higher educational opportunities are limited by the community's insistence on the separation of the sexes in schools and classes and by its objection

**Tuition at Modern Orthodox schools is far higher than the tuition charged by Hasidic or Yeshivish schools.**

to the mores and sexual ethics of American college campuses. Although the standard American college is considered off-limits, there are many alternative options to attain undergraduate and post-graduate degrees. Most well-established higher yeshivas offer their students the opportunity

to receive a college degree for their yeshiva studies -- a Bachelor of Talmudic Law, or "BTL." By doing so, the yeshiva and the student are able to receive government educational allowances and loans. A small number of young men are able to gain acceptance at elite graduate schools, such as Harvard Law School, with their BTLs or other undergraduate degrees.

The Yeshivish community is far more homogeneous than the Hasidic community. However, there is significant variation within the

community with respect to levels of stringency in complying with Jewish law, dedication to Torah study, enjoyment of American popular culture, and social mingling among the sexes. The border between the "leftwing" or "modern" end of the Yeshivish community and the "rightwing" Modern Orthodox community (discussed below) is indistinct. The Yeshivish community is also more accepting of outsiders than the Hasidim, and it has numerous programs and initiatives dedicated to bringing non-religious Jews closer to their form of Judaism.

**Heimish Jews.** Another Orthodox group worthy of mention is referred to as "Heimish." Heimish Jews constitute a form of bridge community between the Hasidim and the Yeshivish. They are Jews whose families have Hasidic roots but no longer identify with a particular stream of Hasidut, and the males among them typically have been educated in Yeshivish educational institutions. At a Heimish synagogue or shtibel, one can expect to find congregants who wear black hats as well as some who wear *shtreimels*, some who will dip in the mikveh before prayers and those who won't. The rabbi of the shtibel will likely leaven his discourse on the portion of the week with material from a Hasidic source. Children of Heimish Jews marry children of other Heimish families, but can as easily marry someone from a mainline Hasidic or standard Yeshivish family.

**The Modern Orthodox Community.** Within the Hasidic and Yeshivish communities the term "modern" is used to characterize behavior that is associated with non-Jews or Jews who are considered non-religious. Behavior that can

be marked as “modern” may include dressing casually or relatively less modestly, or the mixing of genders in a social setting. In this sense of the term, the Modern Orthodox community is indeed modern, and accordingly is quite different from the Hasidic and Yeshivish communities in many areas. Modern Orthodox Jews, by and large, dress like other Americans of their social class, although some form of head covering is generally worn, but not always and not universally, by men and many married women. There are few barriers to the mixing of the sexes in social situations. Elementary and High Schools may be single sex, or have separate classes for boys and for girls in religious studies classes, but many Modern Orthodox day schools and yeshiva high schools are co-ed. Most graduates of Modern Orthodox high schools attend four-year American colleges where they often live on campus together with other students in university housing. Like most other American young adults, Modern Orthodox young adults generally rely on their own initiatives and the help of friends to find a spouse.

“Modern” has an additional meaning with respect to the Modern Orthodox community that is tied to its own self-definition as a distinctive way of being Orthodox. In this sense it refers to an identification with the modern worldview ushered in by the Enlightenment. Modern Orthodox Jews have a deep-seated belief in historical progress, which is perceived to be achieved through the application of human reason to the study of nature and to the administration of social institutions, as evidenced by technological advancement and the expansion of human freedoms and rights. Other

than for the need to comply with the restrictions of Jewish law, for which accommodation is usually found, Modern Orthodox Jews are eager to be full participants in American society and to take advantage of the opportunities for education and material advancement that the modern world has made available; such involvement is indeed viewed as a distinction or achievement, one that is attributed by its thinkers and ideologues as even having a religious value. Modern Orthodox Jews accordingly have greater levels of higher education than Hasidim and Yeshivish Jews, and are fully integrated into the professions and almost all areas of commerce, technology, and even government.

The embrace of progress also affects Modern Orthodox views of Judaism. Although there have been recent trends to the contrary (discussed below), Modern Orthodox Jews have generally rejected aspects of traditional Jewish life that struck them as irrational or “superstitious” and not rooted in Jewish law, and have worked to attenuate traditional gender distinctions, most notably with respect to women’s Torah education, with aggressive steps being taken in recent decades to afford young women the opportunity to study Talmud and Jewish law at an advanced level. Modern Orthodox Jews have also adopted the Enlightenment confinement of religion within certain boundaries, hiving off large areas of life, such as career and recreation, from the reach of religion.

**Modern Orthodox Jews are eager to be full participants in American Society**

Like the Hasidim and the Yeshivish community, Modern Orthodoxy has enjoyed considerable success in recent years. However, its total population has not increased all that much, as the nominally Modern Orthodox – those who identified in earlier surveys as such but had low levels of Jewish education, synagogue attendance, and community involvement – have generally disappeared. The result is a more intensely committed community. The rate of growth of the Modern Orthodox cannot be expected to come close to that of the Chasidic and Yeshivish communities, as Modern Orthodox Jews marry later and have fewer children, although their birthrate is considerably higher than that of non-Orthodox Jews. According to the UJA-Federation study, the mean number of children for Modern Orthodox women ages 35-44 in the New York area is 2.5.<sup>13</sup> A constraint on the growth of the community is the high cost of being Modern Orthodox. Tuition at Modern Orthodox schools, which is far higher than the tuition charged by Hasidic or Yeshivish schools, is a major strain on family budgets, as is the accepted standard of living, which includes sending children to summer camps and to post high school gap year programs in Israel, vacations, and a house in a Modern Orthodox neighborhood. The Modern Orthodox community does not have the same array of social welfare organizations found in the Hasidic and Yeshivish communities. A relatively high proportion of Modern Orthodox men work as professionals and in management positions, and are not in a position to employ members of their community who are in need of a job.

While a traditional but modern life clearly is attractive for many Jews, the hybrid notion of being both Modern and Orthodox can be a volatile mix that produces specific strains. One example is the clash between rabbinic authority and the values of individual autonomy and equality. Modern Orthodox rabbinic authorities have repeatedly emphasized in recent years the need for laypeople to submit in all matters of Jewish law to the authority of accepted rabbinic masters they consider to be authentic transmitters of the tradition (*mesorah*). Many members of the Modern Orthodox community, however, wish to consider issues regarding Jewish law and theology on their own, taking advantage of their own literacy in halachic literature, easy access to digitized textual sources, and online discussions of such topics. This has led to considerable debate, often acrimonious, regarding the role of women in religious life. It is likely that this issue as well as the acceptability of homosexuality, will continue to divide the community for many years to come.

Unlike the Yeshivish community, which has hundreds of yeshivot and *kollels*, the Modern Orthodox community has long had one dominant institution of higher education, which enjoyed, up until fairly recently, little or no direct competition. That institution is Yeshiva University, whose core programs are two undergraduate colleges, one for men and one for women, and a yeshiva, the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), in which a large portion of the male undergraduate population studies and which has post-graduate programs for further advanced study and for ordination. Over the past several decades, RIETS

has undergone a transformation that has given it more of a Yeshivish character than a Modern Orthodox one. This turn has alienated the portion of the community that is proudly Modern Orthodox in its religious views, and has led to the creation of a small assertively Modern Orthodox rabbinical school that describes its philosophy as “Open Orthodox,” and which has an affiliated educational institution for women that provides a form of ordination. The emergence of this second rabbinical school and the competing orientation of Open Orthodoxy has generated a great deal of acrimonious debate within the Modern Orthodox community regarding the boundaries of Orthodox belief. Adding urgency to the debates within the community is a sense of crisis over the sizeable number of younger members of the community who are giving up Orthodox practice.<sup>14</sup>

**The Sephardic Community.** The categories of religious identity the Pew and the UJA-Federation studies employed did not include one specifically for the Sephardic community, an omission that is difficult to defend given its size and distinctiveness. According to the UJA-Federation study, Sephardic Jews account for close to 16 percent of the New York area Jewish population.<sup>15</sup> The broad division of religiously affiliated Jews among Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox is generally inapplicable to the Sephardic community. There are few, if any, Conservative or Reform Sephardic synagogues or temples in the United States. For all practical purposes, Sephardic synagogues would be considered Orthodox by anyone outside of the

Sephardic community, as they all have *mehitzot* (dividers that separate men’s and women’s sections) and follow a traditional liturgy, even though their members may not all be Orthodox in their observance of Jewish law and ritual. The further division of Orthodox Jews into Modern Orthodox, Hasidic, and Yeshivish is also inappropriate as these categories are legacies of European Jewish society.

The key factor of identity for Sephardic Jews is the city or country of origin of one’s family. One of the largest Sephardic communities, if not the largest, in the United States today is the Syrian community, of which there is further division between Jews who originate from Aleppo or Damascus. Other significant Sephardic communities include (in no particular order), Jews originating from Persia, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, and Yemen. Each of these communities has its own liturgy, ritual music, and synagogue and home customs, with some clustering of traditions whose differences are relatively less profound.

The Syrian community is known for its success in business, and there is considerable wealth within the community. The UJA-Federation study reported a significantly lower poverty rate for the Syrian community in the New York area relative to other Jews in the area.<sup>16</sup> The community is very close-knit. Children often choose to reside upon marriage in proximate distance of their parents and maintain close relations. In recent years, Haredi yeshivot have emerged within the Syrian community that are similar in all respects, other than liturgy and certain halakhic practices,

to Ashkenazic/Litvish yeshivas. Among other reasons, it is likely a manifestation of a more global change that has occurred over the past several decades, commonly attributed to the outsized influence of Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef and the Israeli political party he founded (Shas), in which the Sephardic community has adopted many of the values and practices of the Ashkenazic Yeshivish community.

**Chabad-Lubavitch.** Unlike the other Orthodox groups discussed above, Chabad-Lubavitch is a movement with a mission and purpose to effect

**There are presently 4,400 *shluchim* couples posted worldwide in 88 countries**

substantial change in Jewish society, and through it, the world. This mission and purpose is to reach out to as many Jews as possible, all over the world, to bring them closer to God and the practice of Judaism.

The underlying religious philosophy behind the movement is based on the teachings of Chabad Hasidut and especially those of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh Rebbe of Lubavitch, who died in June 1994, after leading the group for 43 years. Critical principles of this philosophy are the following beliefs: the unique elevated character of the Jewish soul and its yearning to be united with its Divine source; the cosmic significance of every mitzvah performed by a Jew; and that we are living in the period just prior to the advent of the Messiah, whose arrival is dependent upon the return of the Jewish people to belief in God and the observance of His

commandments. An ethos of *ahavas yisrael*, a love for every Jew, emerges from these principles and drives the ever-expanding outreach work of the group. (For additional discussion of Chabad theology see the 2014-2015 JPPI Assessment, pp 151-152.)

Chabad performs its outreach efforts through a variety of programs. It is best known for the centers it has established throughout the world, each of which is run by a Lubavitch couple referred to as "*shluchim*," or emissaries. There are presently 4,400 *shluchim* couples posted worldwide in 88 countries, with around 1,700 couples in the United States.<sup>17</sup> There are regional directors who exert some oversight over the centers in their region, but a great deal of leeway is afforded *shluchim* to run their centers in their own particular style and as they see fit. The central Chabad offices based in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, provide some financial support, as well as provision of additional manpower and a vast amount of educational materials, to the *shluchim*. In addition to Chabad centers in cities and towns, there are also a great number of centers on college campuses all over the country. According to an administrator at the Chabad headquarters in Brooklyn, the annual worldwide budget of Chabad is \$1.5 billion.

Chabad centers provide a range of programming and services that can include synagogue services, a *mikveh*, pre-school and even day-school education, adult education, visits to Jews in hospitals and prisons, and kosher catering. *Shluchim* regularly invite people into their home for meals on Shabbat and holidays and make a great effort to meet personally and establish

relationships with as many Jews in their local area as possible. Other Chabad outreach programs include commando-like projects (*mitvza'im*), mostly conducted by young yeshiva students in urban centers where the yeshiva students stop people on the street to ask them if they are Jews, and if they answer affirmatively, attempt to convince them to perform a mitzvah, such as donning *tefillin*, shaking the *lulav* in sukkot, or lighting Shabbat candles.

As pointed out in the discussion of Chabad in JPPI's 2014-2015 Annual Assessment, Chabad differs from other Orthodox groups in that it does not demand an all-or-nothing commitment and welcomes all Jews whatever their level of observance. There are many Jews who retain their affiliation with Reform or Conservative Temples and synagogues, or as members of other Orthodox communities, yet regularly pray at Chabad centers or participate in Chabad programs. Such individuals would not identify themselves as Chabad in population surveys, although their relationship with Chabad is an important part of their overall Jewish identity. The 2014-2015 Assessment also explains how Chabad well suits the "individualist-consumer" orientation to religion common in American society today, in which discrete and eclectic spiritual experiences are preferred to a total and exclusive commitment to a specific religious path.

**The Challenge of Orthodox Growth to Mainstream Jewish Organizations.** The prospect of a rapidly growing Orthodox population that could one day represent a sizeable portion if not the majority of American Jews presents

the established mainstream American Jewish communal organizations with a difficult challenge. In order to maintain their identity as representatives of the entire American Jewish population, and to ensure the funding of their large budgets, the incorporation of the Orthodox within their organizations would seem to be critical to their ongoing viability. There are daunting barriers, however, that will make any such integration extraordinarily difficult.

Three such barriers may be identified as follows. The first is the ideological difference between the Orthodox and the mainstream Jewish communal organizations in their respective conceptions of the Jewish community to which they maintain a sense of loyalty and responsibility. Briefly, while the communal organizations employ a "big-tent" inclusive understanding of the American Jewish community, the Orthodox sense of community is narrowly limited to other Orthodox Jews. Second, the Orthodox community sustains its own network and social service organizations, and has developed its own political capabilities, making it largely self-sufficient, without necessarily needing the support of the mainstream communal organizations. Third, the mainstream Jewish organizations are founded on liberal Enlightenment values that are not

**There are daunting barriers, however, that will make any Ultra-Orthodox integration into mainstream Jewish life extraordinarily difficult**

shared by the Orthodox. Support by communal organizations of Orthodox communities that engage in practices offensive to their values risks damaging the historical institutional identity of these organizations and the ongoing support by their largely liberal constituency.

When speaking of the challenge presented to the mainstream communal organizations by the growth of the Orthodox population, it is necessary to recognize that it is the Haredi sector of the Orthodox population, composed of the Hasidic and the Yeshivish communities, as described above, that is being referred to. The Modern Orthodox sector is largely in tune with the mission of the mainstream communal organizations. To take the UJA-Federation as an example, many Modern Orthodox Jews donate to it, participate in its programs and fundraising efforts, and take leadership positions within the organization, including positions of the highest rank. They may not subscribe to every UJA-Federation initiative or support every position a local branch may take, but they are content to advance their own agenda by working from within. Many members of the Sephardic community also actively support and contribute to the UJA-Federation. The Haredim, however, historically have not been supporters of the major Jewish communal organizations, and it is the share of the Haredim, not of the Modern Orthodox, which is growing as a part of the Orthodox and of the entire Jewish population.

The Jewish community that is the object of the major communal organizations' aid and largess is conceived in radically broad terms, inclusive of Jews of all denominations and of all types, however

they identify or define themselves, religiously, in terms of gender or sexual orientation, or otherwise, as well as Jews who live in other countries. These organizations are also Zionist and support and identify with the State of Israel and its people. By this standard, the Haredi conception of the Jewish community to which it is philanthropically and socially responsible, and to which it feels a sense of brotherhood and solidarity, is quite narrow. The operative term for defining who within this community is "frum" (or "frim," depending on the accent). *Frum* Jews (*frumer yidden*) are Jews who scrupulously adhere to a strict Haredi interpretation of Jewish law and who share a Haredi worldview. Haredim recognize non-Haredi Jews as Jews genealogically (as long as they were born to Jewish mothers), and consequently, in their view, ontologically different from non-Jews in having a distinctly Jewish and superior soul. Only *frum* Jews, however, who live the life that God demands of Jews, unsullied by alien non-Jewish ideas and practices, are authentically Jewish. In the Haredi conception, the category of *frum* Jews does not necessarily include all of the sectors of Orthodox Jewry described above. It is likely that a Satmar Hasid would think of the Modern Orthodox Jew as a "half-goy" (*halbe goy*). The practical consequence of the Haredi conception of the authentic Jewish community is that Haredim will not support directly or indirectly religious, social, or cultural institutions that define themselves as Jewish but are not Haredi; to do so, in their view, would constitute a sacrilege.

With respect to Israel, some Hasidim, like the Satmar, are avowedly anti-Zionist. Many other

Hasidim, as well as the Yeshivish community, express support for Israel, some enthusiastically and others more mutedly, but they do not accept the premise of Religious Zionism that the State of Israel has religious value. However positive their feelings for Israel, Haredim, while they generously support Israeli Haredi institutions, are unlikely to give to the kinds of Israel programs and institutions funded by organizations like the UJA-Federation.

It is important to note that Zionism represents an additional ideological divide between the Haredi sector and the Modern Orthodox sector. The Modern Orthodox educational system indoctrinates its students throughout their school years to admire and support the State of Israel, and to believe in the founding of the State of Israel as a divine intervention marking the beginning of the Redemption. Yom ha-Atzma'ut is celebrated throughout the community as a nationalist and religious holiday. In recent years, there has been a growing phenomenon of graduates of Modern Orthodox high schools serving in the Israeli army. Open criticism within the community of the policies of the State of Israel is generally considered unacceptable. Support for AIPAC and NORPAC is nearly universal, and significant funds are raised on behalf of settler communities in the Occupied Territories. Modern Orthodox synagogues recite the Prayer for the State of Israel every Shabbat morning. Aliyah is encouraged and celebrated. A common theme heard in sermons and schools is that a Jew's real home is in Israel, and that life outside Israel, even in America, is both fragile, as anti-Semitism is an ever-present reality, and somehow inauthentic. Modern Orthodox Jews participate enthusiastically

in fundraising drives run by the major communal organizations on behalf of Israel, especially in times of war or conflict.

Given its explosive growth, pockets of serious poverty, and ever-expanding demands for schools, housing, healthcare, and other social services, it may be expected that on a purely pragmatic basis there is too much for the Haredi sector to gain from joining forces with the established communal organizations for it to permit conflicting ideological conceptions of the Jewish community to get in the way. However, the reality is that the Haredi sector appears to be largely self-sufficient with respect to its own social and political needs.

There are a vast number of Haredi charitable and social service organizations of all types, as well as a huge number of educational institutions, serving the needs of their communities. New "*chesed*" organizations emerge on a regular basis, as the Haredi sector grows and new needs arise. A directory published several years ago, covering Brooklyn and other Haredi neighborhoods in the New York area, listed close to a thousand organizations providing all types of social services and a wide variety of free lending circles called "*gemachs*," in which a repository is established for a particular type of appliance of household item, such as baby strollers, dishes, and wedding dresses, that is lent to those in need on a no-charge and no-questions-asked basis.<sup>18</sup>

The sprawling network of Haredi social service organizations and educational institutions are largely funded from within the Haredi community itself, an indication of the great wealth that exists

alongside the poverty within this sector. The UJA-Federation study reported a high level of poverty for the Hasidic community,<sup>19</sup> but it is likely that estimates of income and wealth for the community are understated, as the extent of its undisclosed cash economy is commonly said to be quite large, and income does not necessarily reflect the value of assets. Whatever the actual level of poverty, the number of Hasidim who have been able to amass great wealth through their business endeavors is not small. Even without a solid secular education and college degree, Hasidim have proven adept

**In the Haredi community, there are extremes of wealth and poverty**

at finding many paths to making money. Many work within the community as rabbis and educators or in other capacities in the very same educational systems and social service organizations whose funding is presently being discussed. Other Hasidim

have retail and service businesses within their own communities. There is no stigma attached to blue-collar work within the Hasidic community, and there are Hasidim who work in construction or as plumbers and electricians for other Hasidim who are real estate developers. Certain industries, such as diamonds and jewelry, have always attracted many Hasidim, and a large number of Hasidim have built highly successful businesses in real estate, retail, and other industries.

As with the Hasidic community, there are extremes of wealth and poverty within the Yeshivish community. There are families that barely subsist

on stipends from *Kollels* where the husband studies full time and whatever the wife can earn while tending to a very large family. On the other hand, there are many members of the community who are successful professionals, and executives and entrepreneurs in a wide variety of industries (with a concentration in real estate, healthcare, and finance). With their English language proficiency, and a greater acceptance of secular education, members of the Yeshivish community have a far easier time finding employment and pursuing careers than do Hasidim. The embourgeoisement of the Yeshivish community has indeed been the subject of critique within the community by those who feel that with the material success of many in the community traditional values of asceticism and restraint have been lost, to the detriment of the community's spiritual state.

In addition to their own internal philanthropy, the Haredi community takes full advantage of available government aid and welfare programs, often in a very organized way. For example, the press has recently reported how the Hasidic neighborhood of South Williamsburg, Brooklyn, has one of the highest concentrations of households with Section 8 housing subsidies in the city, even though it sits within one of the city's hottest real estate markets. According to Rabbi David Niederman, the executive director of the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg, a largely Hasidic social service and charitable community organization, members of the community who are real estate developers have built housing in the area and have deliberately kept rents low to enable poorer members of the community

to become tenants with the help of Section 8.<sup>20</sup> The Haredi community also knows how to lobby local and state officials for additional aid and new programs. Hasidic leaders can offer a politician a sizeable bloc of votes, as Hasidim generally follow the directive of their Rebbe or his adjutants when casting their ballots. Yeshivish leaders do not exert the same authority over their constituents but their endorsement of candidates or parties has considerable weight.

The Haredi Agudath Israel, whose administrative leadership is composed mostly of professionals from the Yeshivish community, regularly sends lobbying missions to Albany. In a recent video report on the group's lobbying efforts, Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel reviewed the objectives it set for the New York State budget, which included increased state aid to non-public schools, reopening the office of the state administrator for non-public schools, the granting of a tax credit for contributions toward non-public school scholarships, and increased State payments to schools for maintaining vaccination records. Agudath Israel had sent 60 of its people to Albany to lobby legislators, equipped with a glossy brochure setting out and explaining their specific requests. Zwiebel was happy with the results, which included an increase of \$72 million in state aid to non-public schools (they had asked for \$115 million), as yeshivas constitute one-third of New York State non-public schools.<sup>21</sup> The Agudath Israel conducts similar lobbying efforts in other cities and has a mission to Washington as well.

A further significant barrier to bringing the Haredi sector into the major communal organizations is

the objectionable nature, from the perspective of the communal organizations and their liberal supporters, of many aspects of Haredi social life. Haredi society's gender differentiations and the severe limitations it places on the public roles of women is an obvious example, as well as its opposition to homosexuality and its disavowal of transgender individuals. The following discussion will highlight three areas where the ideological differences between Haredi society and mainstream liberal Jews would sorely test if not undermine the policy of radical inclusiveness of the major Jewish communal organizations.

#### **General education.**

Few things, if any, are more important for mainstream American Jews than general education in the Western arts and sciences. Education is prized for its instrumental benefits, as a necessary step in material and social advancement, and for the attainment of knowledge in and of itself. At a more basic level, education is the means for realizing the fundamental liberal Enlightenment values of critical rationality and the individual's right to think for oneself can be achieved. The Haredi educational system, and the Hasidic educational system in particular, with its determined avoidance of general secular education, represents an emphatic rejection of perhaps the most central value for mainstream American Jews.

**The Haredi community takes full advantage of available government aid and welfare programs**

The Haredi educational system has come under public attack by an advocacy group founded by a Hasid who left his community, Naftali Moster. Moster grew up in a New York Hasidic home as one of 17 children and is a product of the Hasidic educational system. When he left his community after completing his yeshiva studies, he did not know what an “essay” or a “molecule” was and felt severely hampered in his, ultimately successful, quest to attain a college degree. Moster’s organization, Yaffed, filed a complaint with the New York City Department of Education (DOE) that Hasidic schools were not meeting state-mandated curriculum requirements. Unsatisfied with the DOE’s lackadaisical response, Yaffed has caused legislation to be introduced in the New York State legislature to provide regulators with the tools to enforce state curricular requirements for non-public schools. In an emotional address to his followers, the Satmar Rebbe (Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum) attacked the bills, blaming disgruntled “snitches” intent on turning the government against the Hasidim. Teitelbaum maintained, quite accurately it seems, that the government has always left the Hasidim alone to run their schools as they wished, and that but for the work of these activists, it would have never cared to investigate what is or is not being taught in Hasidic schools. Other Orthodox groups, including the Modern Orthodox-leaning Orthodox Union and the Haredi Agudath Israel, have defended the schools.<sup>22</sup>

Yaffed maintains that Hasidic schools are remiss in not providing its students with the tools to compete successfully in the marketplace and to

be able to earn a comfortable living. This is also how it markets itself to the Haredi community, posting on billboards the Talmudic maxim that a father is obligated to provide his child with a means for making a living. While true, this claim obscures a more fundamental point regarding the resistance of Hasidic yeshivas to the teaching of secular subjects. It is not simply a function of an intense devotion to the study of Torah, but rather a rejection of Western knowledge and of critical rationality: the willingness to subject beliefs and opinions to the test of reason and proof. Moster surely knows that once exposed to the study of secular subjects and of the English language, Hasidic yeshiva students may very well come to question religious belief and the constraints imposed by their community.

**Citizenship.** Organizations such as the UJA-Federation or AIPAC have understood the obligations of the Jewish community as a minority group in American society quite expansively. Recognizing the phenomenal success of Jews in America – their disproportionate social, cultural and political influence and impact and economic accomplishments – these representatives of the Jewish community sense an obligation to act not only for the benefit of the Jewish community, but for the general American society as well.

The Haredim tend to consider themselves an embattled minority in need of protection and autonomy in order for their communities to flourish and their way of life to continue. There are different approaches to achieving this goal within the Haredi sector. At the extreme there is the phenomenon of Kiryas Joel, an independent

village founded in accordance with New York State law in 1977.<sup>23</sup> In 2013, the village had an estimated population 23,000 in 2013.<sup>24</sup> The residents of Kiryas Joel are exclusively Satmar Hasidim, who are expected to adhere to a strict interpretation of Jewish law and modesty rules. Any deviation is punished by ostracization or even physical violence. Insularity and autonomy are founding principles of the village. Municipal officials and functionaries, the mayor as well as the chiefs of police and the fire department, are all Satmar Hasidim. The village is totally segregated from the surrounding non-Jewish community.<sup>25</sup> In 1994, the New York State legislature voted to create a school district whose boundaries were coextensive with those of the village.<sup>26</sup> This is but one example of the village's many successes in securing state aid and legislative favors by leveraging its ability to deliver a bloc of votes into political power. This political power, however, is only deployed for the advancement of the village's own particular interests.

The Yeshivish community of Lakewood, New Jersey provides an interesting contrast to Kiryas Joel. The Orthodox community of Lakewood is an outgrowth of the success of the yeshiva, Beth Medrash Govoha (BMG) founded in 1942 by Rabbi Aharon Kotler with 14 students in what was then a sleepy resort town. The yeshiva now has close to 7,000 students, the largest in North America, and the second largest in the world. The community surrounding the yeshiva has grown with the yeshiva over the years, as alumni decided to settle there after completing their years of study. According to 2010 census figures, Lakewood has

93,000 residents, the seventh largest municipality in the state of New Jersey. BMG sources report that approximately 60 percent of the town's total population, or 55,000 residents, are Orthodox. Like Kiryas Joel, the Orthodox community of Lakewood is growing at an exponential rate, with over 4,000 babies born annually.<sup>27</sup>

Lakewood is significantly different in important respects from Kiryas Joel. Its Orthodox community is not homogeneous. Although largely Yeshivish, it also includes Hasidic and Heimish Jews as well. More significantly, as the population figures indicate, the town is not by any means exclusively Orthodox or Jewish. BMG has taken an active role in town affairs and governance. BMG's local political and social activism is no doubt motivated principally out of a concern for the welfare of the local Orthodox community, but it is clear that it recognizes that in order to advance the interests of the Orthodox community it needs to work on behalf of the broader local community as well, including its non-Jewish residents.

Despite the differences between Kiryas Joel and Lakewood in their concern, or lack thereof, for local non-Jewish residents, the predominant attitude within the Haredi sector is that their political capital and social activism should be expended solely for the benefit of their own Orthodox communities, and not for society at large. It is revealing that Rabbi Zwiebel characterizes Agudath Israel's lobbying efforts as *shtadlanus*, evoking the eastern European figures who interceded on behalf of the Jewish community with non-democratic Gentile governments.<sup>28</sup> The sole purpose of the *shtadlan* was to safeguard and

promote the interests of the Jewish community. This narrow conception of the obligations of a minority vis-à-vis the broader society verges onto a lack of a sense of citizenship that would seem to be at the root of the series of financial scandals within the Haredi sector that have been widely covered in the New York press. Many of these improprieties involve fraud against the government: typically large-scale schemes whereby government benefits and payments are procured with falsified information and documentation. The flouting of law, often by Hasidim, may derive from their strong

**A lack of a sense of citizenship would seem to be at the root of the series of financial scandals within the Haredi sector**

identity as members of a transnational group that includes Hasidim living in Europe, Israel, and elsewhere, which stands apart from any specific national identity.

**Individual rights.** A fundamental principle of liberal Enlightenment thought, one that is pervasive in American

society, is that the individual is the basic unit of society and the bearer of rights. Haredim value the group as opposed to the individual, and consider it to be the bearer of rights. This orientation was made abundantly – and to many non-Haredim, shockingly – clear in a very public controversy in New York City that carried on for a number of years. The controversy concerned the traditional practice of *metzitzah ba-peh* (MBP), the sucking of the circumcision wound by a mohel. Between 2004 and 2011, 11 male infants in New York

City were stricken with the herpes simplex virus within days of having had MBP performed at their circumcision. Two of the babies died and two suffered brain damage.<sup>29</sup>

Mentioned in the Mishna, MBP had been a part of the traditional Jewish circumcision rite until the nineteenth century when medical professionals claimed it was unhygienic and a potential cause of infection. The question of whether to continue the practice divided the Orthodox Jewish community. Some rabbinic authorities asserted that suction is not an essential part of the circumcision ritual and could be abandoned or, alternatively, that the suction could be performed through the medium of a tube. Other more conservative authorities ruled that the practice of direct oral suction must be preserved unchanged. Hasidic rabbis were prominent in their advocacy for the maintenance of the custom, and to this day Hasidim and many within the Yeshivish community practice MBP. The Modern Orthodox community opposes MBP, and its rabbis have ruled that if suction is to be performed, it must be done through a tube.<sup>30</sup>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a report in 2012 advising against MBP, warning that it raises the likelihood that an infant will get herpes by 340 percent. Despite intense lobbying of the Bloomberg administration by the Agudath Israel, the New York City Board of Health passed a law requiring mohels to collect consent forms from parents containing an acknowledgment by the parents that MBP “exposes an infant to the risk of transmission of herpes simplex virus infection, which may result in brain damage or death.” More than 200 Orthodox rabbis ordered their followers not to

comply with the new regulation.<sup>31</sup> The Agudath Israel filed a lawsuit in federal court claiming that the regulation was an unconstitutional restriction on the freedom of religion.<sup>32</sup>

The MBP regulation became an election issue one year later in the Democratic primary for mayor. The Satmar community of Brooklyn in particular exerted pressure on Bill de Blasio, who had been their community's representative for over eight years in the City Council. At a rally for de Blasio sponsored by Satmar held days before the primary, a Hasidic spokesman announced, in de Blasio's presence, that if elected, de Blasio would "take away, right away" the MBP consent regulation instituted by the Bloomberg administration and that Orthodox Jews would be able to practice the mitzvah of *bris milah* "without compromise."<sup>33</sup> Not long after de Blasio was elected mayor, and after consultations between the Board of Health and local rabbis, the city did indeed rescind the consent form regulation. The city reached an agreement with the rabbis that whenever a herpes infection occurred after an MBP circumcision, the Orthodox community would assist the city in identifying the mohel and in having him tested for herpes. If the mohel tested positive for herpes, the community would try to have him undergo further DNA testing to determine whether he had transmitted the disease. If an infected mohel were linked to an infected baby, the mohel would be prohibited from performing circumcision in the future.<sup>34</sup> Just prior to the actions of the de Blasio administration, the Agudath Israel was successful in its appeal of a decision by a federal district court that upheld the constitutionality of the consent form regulation. The appellate court overturned

the decision of the lower court and directed it to apply a more stringent legal standard as it held that the regulation impinged on the exercise of freedom of religion.<sup>35</sup>

While the rescinding of the consent form regulation and the institution of the new protocol was heralded by the Haredi sector as a great achievement, medical and public health professionals, many of whom were Jewish, criticized the move, as the number of herpes infections suspected to have been caused by MBP in New York City had jumped in the previous year. While the American understanding of individual rights awards parents the right to bring up children as they see fit, the Haredi attitude towards MBP goes beyond this common understanding. The Haredi community stood firm in its belief that it is impossible that a practice that Jews have performed for centuries and endorsed by the Talmud could cause harm to Jewish infants. The argument that infants should not be made to risk significant physical harm and even death for the beliefs of their parents and community carried no weight with them, as the community, not the individual infant, is in their understanding the bearer of rights, and the right of the community to ensure its continuity and way of life is of highest importance. This same attitude would seem to underlie the resistance of the Hassidic community to report cases of child and domestic abuse to the police and local governmental authorities.

**In the Haredi understanding, the community not the individual is the bearer of rights**

## Conclusion

The barriers to the integration of the Haredi sector into the established mainstream Jewish communal organizations are significant. Fundamental ideological conflicts divide the Haredim and the broader Jewish population, and given the existence of their own network of charitable and social service organizations, there is a lack of incentive on the Haredi side to bridge those differences. In sorting out the options available to the established communal organizations it is useful to consider the similar predicament faced by liberal democratic states in dealing with illiberal minority communities.

The liberal democratic state typically recognizes the right of ethnic and religious communities to reproduce themselves, and believes it should be tolerant of these communities even when their values and ideologies clash with those of the liberal mainstream. Mainstream Jewish organizations similarly have a strong interest in seeing the Haredi sector flourish, committed as these organizations are to the growth of the Jewish people and the perpetuation of its traditions.

The great difficulty faced by the liberal democratic state is where an illiberal community does not permit, and does what it can to prevent, its members from developing an additional or secondary identity as citizens of the state and the internalization of the individual rights and responsibilities attendant thereto.<sup>36</sup> The Haredi sector is a “totalizing” community of this sort, demanding exclusive identification from its members; it does what it can to prevent its

members from developing additional identities, including identifying with the inclusive big-tent Jewish community envisioned by the mainstream Jewish organizations. Furthermore, in the Haredi case, identifying with the inclusive, big tent Jewish community may not be just an additional identity but may flatly contradict a central tenet of Haredi ideology – that only the Haredim are really Jewish. As long as the Haredi sector continues to hold fast to its singular and narrow conception of the Jewish community – and there is little reason to think that this will soon change – it cannot be expected that the Haredi sector can be integrated into today’s mainstream Jewish organizations as full participants in its projects and as financial supporters.

Jewish organizations will need to work selectively with the Haredi sector. They will need to seek out those individuals and groups within the Haredi sector who are open to collaboration, bring Haredim into administrative and managerial roles within their organization to the extent they can, and identify the types of programs that fill a need and can garner financial and other support from some corner of the Haredi sector. At the same time, any organization that wishes to develop a substantive relationship of mutual support with the Haredi sector must recognize that it cannot also engage in public criticism of their way of life, or provide support to organizations like Yaffed who seek to reform their practices in some way. This limitation will sorely test an organization’s capacity for tolerance, and it is likely to meet with resistance and opposition from among an organization’s mainstream leadership and long-standing supporters.

In order to work effectively in this selective manner, the mainstream Jewish organizations will need to commit significant resources towards attaining a thorough understanding and appreciation of the various Haredi communities. Practically speaking, this would mean the hiring of Yiddish speakers, persons who are or who once were members of these communities and still have ties to them, and academically-trained researchers who will be tasked with spending time with Haredi Jews in their communities, getting to know them up close in an intimate fashion, and developing relationships of mutual respect.

A possible alternative to working with the Haredi sector in this selective manner, identifying specific projects, people, and groups with whom to work, would be to establish separate affiliates that serve the Haredi sector and which are largely staffed and managed by Haredim. Such affiliates could be designed in such a way that would grant them considerable autonomy, with a mechanism in place affording some degree of oversight and guidance by the regular staff of the organization. The affiliate would gain from the experience of the organization, its range of professionals, and its network of connections. The organization could help develop programs for the Haredi sector that the Haredim strictly on their own would have difficulty developing, such as more serious college, advanced degree, and mid-career management training programs. The creation of largely independent Haredi affiliates, however, can be expected to alienate the liberal core constituencies of such organizations who object to Haredi social values and practices.

If not palatable now, the establishment by mainstream Jewish organizations of Haredi affiliates may become a more attractive and practical solution as the Haredim become a greater and greater portion of the total Jewish population and a more comprehensive relationship with the Haredi sector is seen to be necessary. If the Orthodox population does at some point become the largest identifiable population group of American Jews or even the majority of American Jews, as some have predicted, those organizations that view their authority as deriving from their acting as representatives of American Jewry as a whole will face an existential dilemma. An argument could be made that the keys to their organization should then be handed over to the Orthodox. On the other hand, a strong counter-argument would be that if such a step were to be taken, non-Orthodox Jews would suffer unacceptably from Haredi intolerance of other forms of Jewish identity. In order to forestall such crises and to preserve the liberal character of the major communal organizations long term, it will be necessary to find ways in the immediate term to include the illiberal Haredi sector as participants and contributors, despite the inevitable conflicts and compromises that it entails.

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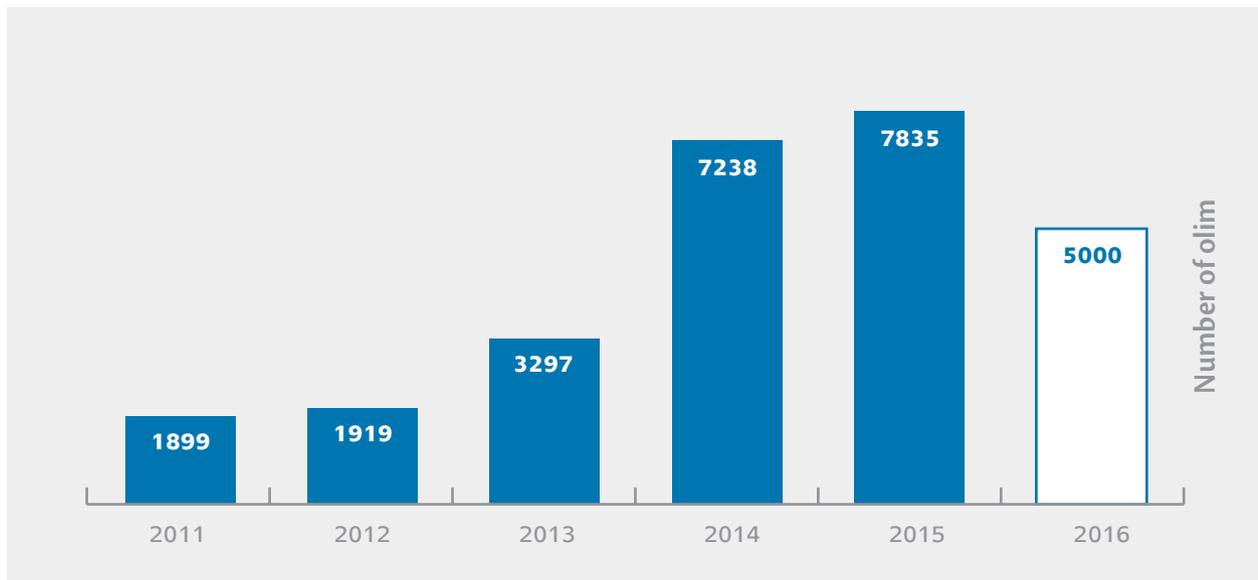


## French Aliyah: Governmental Efforts and Recommendations for Realizing the Full Potential

In the wake of the January 2015 terrorist attacks on the Charlie Hebdo satirical weekly and the Porte de Vincennes kosher supermarket, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accompanied French President François Hollande on a visit to the Grand Synagogue of Paris, where a memorial gathering was held for the victims of the attack. Speaking in the presence of senior French government officials and key Jewish community leaders, Netanyahu referred to Israel as "the home of all of us" and said that "any Jew who wishes to immigrate to Israel will be welcomed with open arms and a warm and accepting heart."<sup>1</sup>

The reassuring speech did not fall on deaf ears: the Israeli Prime Minister's assurance that French Jewry could regard the Jewish state as a safe harbor in case of need was met with thunderous applause, and an official plan to encourage French Aliyah soon followed. In light of recent economic, demographic, and political upheavals in France, and in the shadow of intensifying anti-Semitism and terrorism, a significant number of French Jews now regard Aliyah as a real option, and the prime minister's statement as an invitation, even a State commitment, to assist them in the immigration and absorption process.

## Downturn in the pace of immigration from France, despite increased efforts to encourage Aliyah



Source: The Jewish Agency for Israel (number of olim, including those changing status while in Israel)

The 2016 forecast presupposes stability in the pace of Aliyah over the course of the year.

### Successful absorption is the key to encouraging Aliyah

Over the past decade, and especially during the past three years, interest in Aliyah among French Jews has grown. The Israeli government, which identified this trend, has passed four government resolutions on this issue: resolutions 1736 and 1737 (June 22, 2014); Resolution 2225 (November 23, 2015); and Resolution 2446 (February 15, 2015). The latter was accompanied by a NIS 180 million budgetary commitment to encourage Aliyah from France, Belgium and the Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> The governmental intervention encompassed four complementary measures: (1) encouraging Aliyah; (2) establishing a committee to remove

bureaucratic barriers, including those pertaining to professional licensing and registration; (3) improving the absorption process; and (4) creating an independent public benefit corporation to coordinate the efforts.

Implementation of these resolutions substantially raised immigrant numbers: from 3,297 in 2013 to 7,835 in 2015. This increase was largely made possible by the effective cooperation of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, the Jewish Agency for Israel, and the World Zionist Organization, and coordination with other government entities. However, the jump in French Aliyah was short-lived; despite the efforts of the Israeli government and other relevant bodies, there has been a slowdown in the first eight

months of 2016: 3,452 olim compared to 5,930 during the first eight months of 2015. Should this trend continue, 2016 will witness a 40 percent decline in French immigrant numbers compared to 2015.

The reason for this slowdown is not entirely clear, but a number of possibilities have been raised: (1) The French prime minister's commitment to protect the community, and the measures taken to contain anti-Semitism; (2) Diminished ideology-based Aliyah (i.e., those most committed to the Zionist idea have already immigrated to Israel); (3) Increased terrorism and a weaker sense of personal security in Israel.

Conversations with Aliyah candidates and shlichim (emissaries) working with them pointed to yet another factor behind the slowdown: a sense of disappointment with the Israeli absorption system. French Jews considering Aliyah, fear a fate similar to that endured by some of their relatives. A chief concern is that they will find it difficult to work in their chosen fields, or to earn at the level to which they have become accustomed. For these reasons some French Jews are delaying Aliyah, or even moving to countries other than Israel.

An in-depth assessment of the situation reveals that once the initial absorption period in Israel has ended, along with its accompanying support and guidance structures, many new immigrants are left feeling that their Hebrew is inadequate, that they face barriers to suitable employment, and that their children have trouble making their way in the Israeli school system. The sense of disappointment is reflected in the fact that, for the first time in the

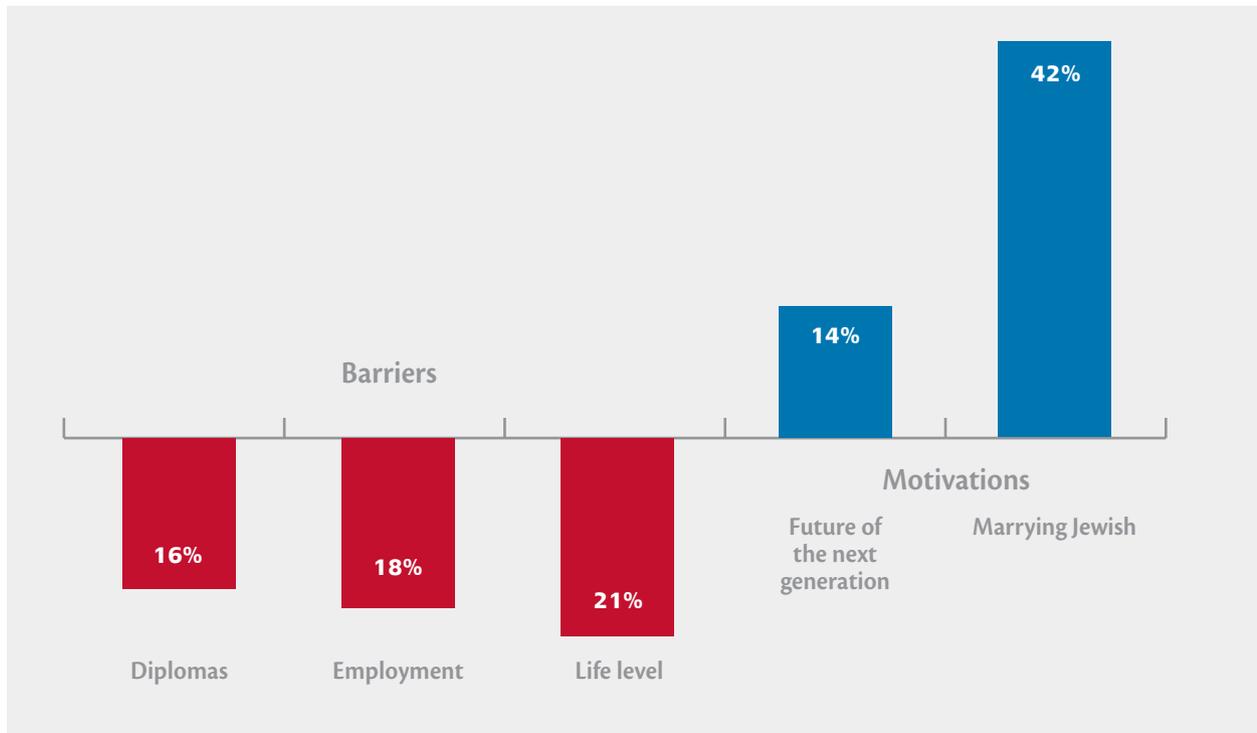
history of French Aliyah, immigrants have started organizing under an umbrella organization. The organization, called Qualita, aims to raise Israeli public awareness of the difficulties and obstacles faced by French olim and to call attention to areas where state intervention is urgently needed.<sup>3</sup>

## **Assessing the potential: 200,000 French Jews are considering immigration to Israel**

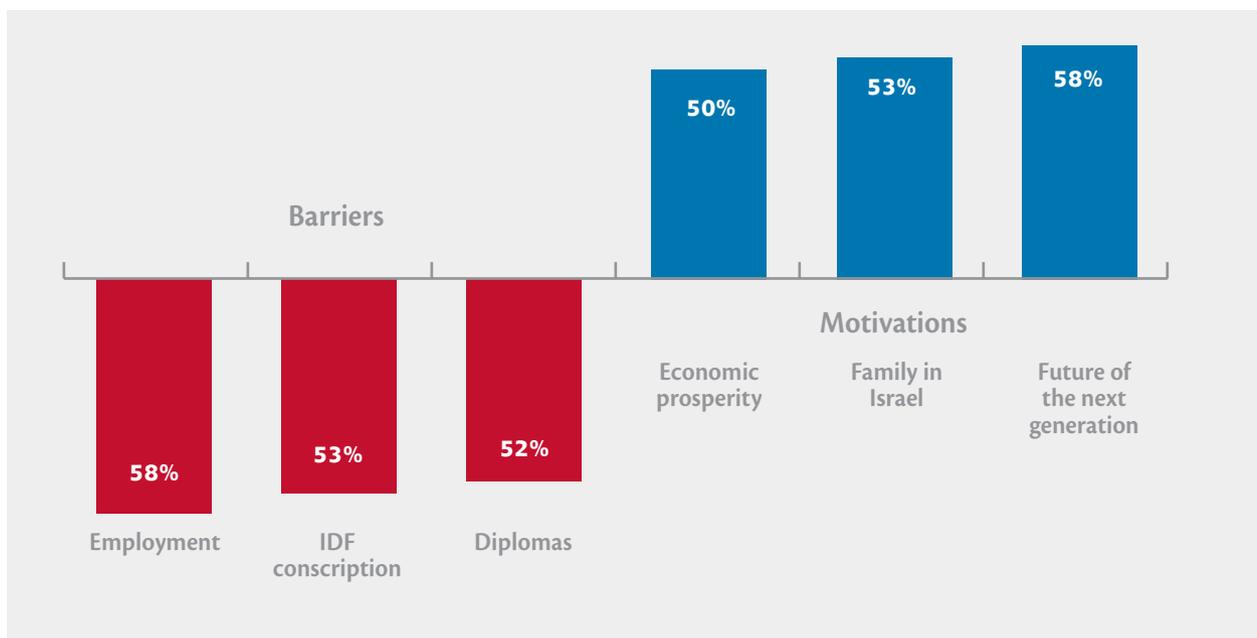
In January 2016, the findings of two in-depth studies of French Jews' desire to immigrate to Israel were published. One study was conducted by the survey institute IFOP, the other by a competing firm, IPSOS.<sup>4</sup> Although they used different methodologies, both studies indicate that many French Jews feel threatened in the country of their birth and are seriously thinking about leaving. Of the half-million Jews currently living in France, 40 percent are considering the possibility of moving to Israel.<sup>5</sup>

Based on these survey findings, the Aliyah slowdown does not necessarily indicate that the pool of French Jewish Aliyah candidates has "dried up" or that interest in immigration has lessened. Rather, it likely indicates the existence of delaying factors that have yet to be addressed. If this is the case, then actualizing the untapped French Aliyah potential will require efforts of a different kind, suited to the challenges of this new target population.

## Motivations and Barriers among Adults without Children



## Motivations and Barriers among Adults with Children



**Table 1: Estimated Number of French Jews Seriously Considering or Interested in Emigration**

(In parentheses: percentage of the entire Jewish community)

Survey institute	Considering Aliyah to Israel		Considering emigration but not to Israel	
	IFOP	IPSOS	IFOP	IPSOS
Seriously considering emigration	65,000 (13%)	90,000 (18%)	95,000 (19%)	75,000 (15%)
Total interested in emigration	215,000 (43%)	175,000 (35%)	255,000 (51%)	200,000 (40%)

## Socio-cultural profile of French olim

Half of the immigrants arriving in Israel from France in 2014 had academic backgrounds (16 or more years of schooling); half of them were under the age of 34, while 29 percent were 24 or younger. This is a young and highly educated population capable of making an impressive contribution

to Israel's labor force in the coming years.<sup>6</sup> In the economic sphere, a number of studies predict that investment in Aliyah from the West would justify itself within a year, and that such Aliyah could potentially make a significant contribution to Israel's economy (the value of the positive impact of 18,000 North American olim on the Israeli economy during the period 2002-2008 was over a billion shekels).

**Table 2: Profile of Olim in Recent Years<sup>7</sup>**

2014 data	France	Ukraine	Russia
16+ years of schooling	51%	52%	43%
Women	51%	53%	54%
Married men	74%	67%	66%
Married women	64%	60%	54%
Divorced women	6%	11%	13%
Widows	7%	9%	8%
Single-parent families	3%	5%	
Single seniors	11%	11%	
Young people to age 24	29%	6%	
Young adults to age 34	47%	22%	
Seniors above age 75	11%	30%	

## Employment prospects and Aliyah

Thanks to an extensive publicity campaign by Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization emissaries over the past two years, Aliyah has become a stronger presence in French public awareness, and many French Jews see it as a real option. Unlike immigrants from distressed countries who have compelling reasons to emigrate that often intensify over time, and in contrast to idealists motivated by a Zionist-pioneer ethos, the average *oleh* (immigrant) from an affluent country is unwilling to forego employment in the field for which s/he trained, or embark on an entirely new vocational training path at the bottom of the pay scale. The unique attributes of these potential *olim* differ from those of earlier immigration waves. In the past, most governmental effort was directed at highlighting Israel's advantages and encouraging Aliyah and providing initial absorption services (including teaching Hebrew in *ulpan* settings). Employment was relegated to the post-*ulpan* period.

In our view, accelerating the pace of immigration from France does not entail augmenting current Aliyah-management efforts. Nor is there a need for aggressive marketing campaigns or additional Aliyah fairs. What is needed is a response to the basic needs of employment, including degree recognition, professional training, job placement, and assistance in finding affordable housing.

## Implementing government resolutions

Various initiatives sprang from government Aliyah resolutions. Some have been executed successfully, some have been implemented with only partial success, and others have not been implemented at all. On the basis of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption directions and with ministry funding, the relevant agencies have worked to improve the array of pre-Aliyah processes: they have increased exposure to Israel, especially via the Taglit-Birthright Israel and MASA programs. French Taglit participant numbers rose from 103 in 2013 to 2,100 in 2015, thanks to efforts by the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs; BBB pilot trips for 12th graders increased their participant numbers from 1,200 to 1,500. MASA enrollment increased from 1,000 in 2013 to 1,400 young people in 2015 (80 percent of whom changed their status from tourist to *oleh* at the end of the program). These activities have been highly successful, and the bottleneck that emerged due to the threefold increase in Aliyah candidates has been handled satisfactorily.

The preparatory stage for Aliyah to Israel, implemented in the country of origin – a stage that was all but irrelevant for waves of immigration from distressed countries – requires special attention when the immigration is from affluent countries such as those of Western Europe and North America. Here, as well, the Israeli government is making significant investments: 25 new Hebrew *ulpan* classrooms have already been opened, with another 75 expected to open in the future; there is a concerted effort to make reliable

information on occupational licensing available in French (the option has been created of submitting documents to the occupational licensing committee before actually relocating to Israel); and several license exam preparation courses have been launched in France. Additionally, two employment counselors and an IDF representative who provides information to those subject to conscription have been posted in France.

Regarding the issue of degree recognition, several major successes have been achieved: French degrees in practical engineering and some degrees in para-medical fields have been granted automatic recognition. On March 26, 2016 a law was passed by the Knesset exempting dentistry degree holders from Western countries from the Israeli licensing exam.

In the sphere of absorption at the municipal level, the number of “proyektorim” (case managers who help families with initial absorption) has been increased from 7 in 2013 to 17 in 2016. We have no detailed information regarding French olim in particular, but for the group of olim from Ukraine, France, or Belgium – initial efforts have been made that have proven effective in terms of access to employment. The most prominent of these efforts were: two licensing courses in which 30 people participated; a job fair in which 700 families took part; employment counseling for over 1,000 people; the creation of 50 business models and business plans for immigrants who own businesses in their countries of origin; 131 feasibility studies for potential immigrant businesses; over 50 entrepreneurship conferences and workshops in Israel and abroad; the distribution of 700

vocational training vouchers, and 300 vouchers for Hebrew language study. It is important to note that in 2014, when French olim accounted for 24 percent of all immigrants, 1,071 employment vouchers were distributed to the entire immigrant population, but – mainly due to bureaucratic reasons – only 98 to French olim, that is, only 9.1 percent of the vouchers were allocated to French olim.

The Education Ministry allocated NIS 20 million (funded by the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption) underwrote six weekly hours of educational guidance for immigrant pupils during their first year in Israel; additionally, French-speaking mediators were assigned to improve communication between teachers and non-Hebrew-speaking parents. In Jerusalem and Ashdod, learning centers were established for immigrant pupils. Unsurprisingly, children of families living outside major immigrant concentration centers receive fewer services.

## **Additional efforts required in the employment sphere**

Putting aside for the moment issues of occupational licensing (e.g., licensing procedures for pharmacists, nurses and investment consultants, as well as the component of Government Resolution 2225 that relates to reserved public service jobs), we can say that most elements of the government resolutions have been implemented successfully. The downturn in Aliyah is due to the fact that the resolutions focused mainly on encouraging Aliyah, while

absorption, especially its employment aspects, did not receive the attention it deserved. This eroded both the potential for Aliyah and the potential for absorption.

To preserve what has been achieved in terms of encouraging Aliyah and streamlining management of French immigrants' Aliyah files, it is urgent that the 2015 special budgetary allocation be renewed

for 2016 and 2017. However, if we are to realize the potential that Aliyah from France represents, we must also be prepared to undertake additional efforts – particularly in the employment sphere. Improving employment absorption entails an occupational guidance initiative (providing guidance, personal assistance, vocational counseling) as well as augmented placement services.

### The Aliyah Continuum of Employment-Oriented Services



### Employment and businesses

- **Relocating businesses.** To keep more affluent populations from emigrating to competing countries, and to ensure that Israel also reaps the benefits of a highly-skilled immigrant pool, we should encourage and prioritize entrepreneurs who choose to relocate a major portion of their commercial activity to Israel. Not only will bringing these entrepreneurs to Israel contribute economically to the state; it could also potentially create large numbers of

French-speaking workplaces for future olim from France.<sup>8</sup>

- **Special programs for occupations in high demand in Israel.** Structured employment programs should be launched similar to those designed in the past for engineers and physicians from the CIS. In coordination with Israeli employers interested in hiring their graduates, these programs would involve early identification in France and Belgium and initial training in Israel. Relevant occupations

include researchers in selected fields, specialist physicians, engineers, investment consultants, and more.

- **Vocational guidance centers.** In cities with large numbers of immigrants, it is advisable to establish vocational guidance centers that provide assessment, courses and training vouchers, and personal guidance and placement services. These centers should also be accessible to Aliyah candidates, prior to immigration.

## Housing and Communal Life

- Addressing the employment problem without offering appropriate housing options only constitutes a partial solution. Enlarged mortgages of 90 percent should be permitted (like those available in the subsidized Mechir LaMishtachen housing program). Making absorption centers available to young families for their first three years in Israel is another appropriate solution for this population.
- **Relocating communities.** Efforts should be made to involve community rabbis in developing group Aliyah plans for members of their communities, in coordination with appropriate Israeli local authorities. Interested local authorities would offer special benefits, including land for synagogue construction and part-time jobs for community heads, as project managers or "spiritual absorption officers."

## Conclusion

After several years of increase in French immigration, 2016 shows signs of a significant decline, despite the fact that 40 percent of French Jews say they are considering immigration to Israel (see Table 1 above).

The main barriers keeping potential immigrants from making Aliyah are related to employment, children's education, and housing. This document proposes ways of overcoming these three obstacles, and of easing immigrant absorption. The employment barrier can be minimized through a focused effort on vocational guidance and degree recognition even before the immigrant leaves his/her country of origin, as well as by initiating training and placement programs for French olim after arrival in Israel. Because the French olim are highly educated (half of all French immigrants have higher education, and half are under the age of 34), there is no question that such an investment would prove productive and worthwhile for the Israeli economy.

In recent years, the Israeli government has focused successfully on improving the administrative side of Aliyah, resulting in the immigration of 20,000 people over the past three years. Actualizing the Aliyah potential of tens of thousands of additional Jews will entail employment-focused initiatives and efforts, both in France and in Israel.

If Israel prepares itself to offer such services, it will be able, for the first time in the history of Zionism, to welcome a mass Aliyah of olim from affluent countries. This would be a historic breakthrough,

and would create an opportunity to test new mechanisms that may, in the future, foster large-scale immigration from other Western countries. The magnitude of this challenge requires a correspondingly monumental governmental effort.

## Endnotes

1 "Any Jew who wishes to immigrate to Israel will be welcomed with open arms and warm and accepting hearts. They will not arrive in a foreign land but rather the land of our forefathers. God willing, they will come and many of you will come to the home of all of us." From: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks at the Grand Synagogue of Paris on January 11, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTvQImWRvWA>

2 Government of Israel, Government Resolution No. 1736: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/Secretary/GovDecisions/2014/Pages/dec1736.aspx>

Government of Israel, Government Resolution No. 1737: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/Secretary/GovDecisions/2014/Pages/dec1737.aspx>

Government of Israel, Government Resolution No. 2225: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/SecretaryGovDecisions/2010/Pages/des2025.aspx>

Government of Israel, Government Resolution No. 2446: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/Secretary/GovDecisions/2015/Pages/des2446.aspx>

3 According to an as-yet-unpublished survey commissioned by Qualita (an umbrella organization for Francophone olim), French immigrants' level of satisfaction with Israeli employment-absorption services is low (3 on a scale of 10); most olim are interested in

vocational training and many are uninformed about the existence of training program vouchers.

4 Although the research findings may seem unrealistic (over 75% of French Jews are considering emigration) and inconsistent with current Aliyah rates, they nevertheless indicate uncertainty regarding destinations and the existence of a potentially significant pool of individuals eligible for Aliyah who are open to hearing about their options in Israel.

The IFOP study: [http://www.ifop.fr/media/pressdocument/883-1-document\\_file.pdf](http://www.ifop.fr/media/pressdocument/883-1-document_file.pdf).

The IPSOS study: <http://www.fondationjudaisme.org/wp-content/uploads/PRESENTATION-GLOBALE-ENQUETE.pdf>.

In 2012, 49% of French Jews expressed interest in emigrating due to concerns about personal security (per a study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights): <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-discrimination-and-hate-crime-against>

5 According to a position paper by Qualita (an umbrella organization for Francophone olim) that was submitted to Absorption Minister Ze'ev Elkin in May 2016.

6 Deloitte Information Technologies Israel Ltd. The Economic Impact of Nefesh B'Nefesh Aliyah on the State of Israel, October, 2009, p. 4.

7 Courtesy of Qualita.

8 On relocating companies from France and creating thousands of new workplaces suited to olim, see the Jewish People Policy Institute's innovative plan: <http://jppi.org.il/uploads/Plan%20for%20Immigration%20from%20France-En.pdf>



## Austrian Jewry 70+ Years after the Shoah

Despite their almost complete annihilation during World War II, the Jewish communities in Austria – and especially the Vienna Jewish community, 98 percent of Austria’s Jewish population – have regained a religious, cultural and economic strength unimaginable in 1945. From being considered *Liquidationsgemeinden* (communities to be liquidated – by its members) without any future, whose members even tried to conceal their Jewishness from their gentile neighbors, they have become a thriving religious, cultural and economic entity that acts self-confidently and forthrightly in the political and cultural arenas, are firmly ensconced in the surrounding society, and are actively involved in the affairs of European and world Jewry (e.g. former IKG president Ariel Muzicant was for many years vice president of the European Jewish Congress; Kashrut Europe (KE) and the Union of Mohalim in Europe are based in Vienna, and the latter is also presided by Rabbi Shlomo Hofmeister from Vienna).

Until the late 1970s, for most Jews in Austria, except for the community leaders, the fact that

they were living in the country was an “accident of the war,” which had left them, against their will, in the “land of the perpetrators.” Although they stayed on for various personal reasons, it was always their intention to leave (in most cases for Israel), and they never consciously decided to settle there permanently. Instead, they saw themselves as “sitting on packed suitcases.” But during the following decade, they opened themselves up toward the surrounding gentile society and developed a “feeling of belonging to their environment” that enabled them to come out proudly as Jews and become an integral—though not assimilated—part of the local society, in which they not only do not feel threatened but believe that they have a future.

Moreover, although the Vienna Jewish community is relatively small (about 8,000 registered members), it has since the 1980s engaged in a massive drive to expand Jewish infrastructure – from eating to learning and praying – and a vital and visible Jewish life. The extent of infrastructure even exceeds significantly larger communities in

other countries. In contrast to many communities in Europe, the Vienna community has also reached a high degree of communal unity.

This overview will delineate the reconstruction of Jewish communal life in Austria after 1945, and shed light on how these developments came about and what factors shaped community reconstruction.

## Communal Framework

Local survivors established Jewish communities in Austria immediately after World War II.

**Since 1945 the Jews of Austria have a centralized community structure which accommodates members of all streams in Judaism**

They have a centralized community structure at the local level, the *Einheitsgemeinde* (unity community), which accommodates members of all streams in Judaism from Orthodox to Reform under one roof. This structure was adopted in 1945 and is based on the *Einheitsgemeinde* model that had existed in

Austria before the *Shoah*. That model stipulated the existence of only one *Einheitsgemeinde* – a single official community<sup>1</sup> – in each locality. Its main characteristics are: (a) only halachic Jews can be members, and membership is upon application and can be canceled; (b) democratic elections for the community board; (c) sole responsibility for the external representation of the entire Jewish population; and (d) umbrella for different religious groups that act autonomously

in making internal political and religious decisions.

In 1960, the Austrian Jewish communities entered into a formal financial relationship with the Austrian state, attaining the same status as the two other major religious organizations at the time, the Catholic and the Protestant churches, who by law receive state funding annually.

The *Einheitsgemeinde* structure has remained unchanged until today. The biggest community by far is the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien* (Jewish community Vienna, IKG), in Vienna, whose judicial district includes five out of the nine Austrian provinces. All four – Wien, Salzburg, Linz, and “Tirol und Vorarlberg” – are local (provincial) organizational units of the *Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft* (Jewish religion association, IRG), the legal entity representing the Austrian Jews to the Republic of Austria. Due to the overwhelming size of the Viennese community in Austria’s Jewry, the IKG political leadership heads the IRG.

The *Einheitsgemeinde* structure was imposed on the Jewish communities in the 19th century in order to make state supervision easy. After World War II, it was in the communities’ best interest to maintain this political unity structure. All IKG leaders regarded it as mandatory for strengthening Jewish life in an already small Jewish community and for attaining political and social standing in Austria.

## Demography

At the end of World War II, there were fewer than 4,000 Jews in Vienna (about 2 percent of the prewar Jewish population). Most surviving and returning *Alt-Wiener*<sup>2</sup> Jews identified with Orthodox Judaism at all levels of observance, while a minority was distant from such religious identification. They were joined in the early 1950s by some 3,000 Jewish displaced persons (DPs), who stayed in the country after the closure of the allied DP camps. By and large, these DPs, who came mainly from central and eastern European countries, were observant, and some even Haredi. In the late 1950s and in the 1960s a wave of immigration to Vienna of Jews from those countries,<sup>3</sup> particularly Hungary, led to the diversification of the IKG by the presence of significant numbers of Jews committed to different streams within Orthodoxy ranging from the Modern Orthodox and Zionist Mizrachi to the Haredi and fervently anti-Zionist Satmar Hasidim. In the 1970s and 1980s, further diversification occurred with the immigration and settlement in Vienna of some 3,000 Jews from the Soviet Union – mainly from Bukhara and Georgia. The majority of these Jewish immigrants maintained a traditional way of life.<sup>4</sup> Due to this immigration, new elements of Sephardi Jewish identity and tradition were introduced into Vienna's postwar Jewish community, which for three decades had remained almost exclusively Ashkenazi.

Thus, over the past few decades, the Jewish population in Vienna has become more observant (even if the majority is more traditional than strictly

observant) and diverse in terms of Orthodox practice and ideology, and more heterogeneous in terms of ethnic origin. Accordingly, there are nine Orthodox congregations in the IKG and another two religious groups outside the IKG framework (the Haredi Chabad-Lubavitch and the Progressive Or Chadasch<sup>5</sup>).

Today 7,787 Jews are registered members of the IKG<sup>6</sup>, most of whom are under the age of 40. Until the 1980s, it seemed the Vienna Jewish community was doomed to simply fade away, due to emigration, low birth rates, and high mortality rates due to demographic

ageing. Thanks to immigration from the Soviet Union, in 1990, for the first time since 1945, the IKG registered more births than deaths, and average age dropped to below 50. In 2016, half of IKG members were under the age of 40, and over 60 percent under 50.<sup>7</sup> This demographic development stands in

contrast to the skewed age pyramids in most European Jewish communities – small and large (e.g. in Germany, 40.3 percent of the members are under the age of 50<sup>8</sup>). It is mainly due to the high birthrate among Haredi Jews (about 20-25 percent of the IKG members<sup>9</sup>), the relatively high birthrate among (traditional) Sephardi Jews compared to the non-Haredi Ashkenazim, and the increasing birthrate among the latter. Additionally,

**Thanks to immigration from FSU and high Haredi birthrates, the Austrian Jewish community has a relatively young population**

the crumbling of ethnic barriers within the Jewish community resulted in broader local marriage prospects. Increasingly accepted Ashkenazi-Sephardi “mixed marriages” helped reduce the emigration of younger Jews.

## Leadership

Until the 1981 communal elections, IKG leadership significantly differed from the greater Jewish population: While from the mid-1950s, the majority of members were from Central and Eastern Europe, all IKG leaders were *Alt-Wiener*. While religion played a major role in the lives of most community members, its political leadership was predominantly secular in attitude and behavior. While the Jews were involved with Austrian society and politicians to a minimum, the *Bund Werktätiger Juden* (Union of Working Jews, BWJ), IKG’s ruling fraction between 1952 and 1981,<sup>10</sup> was closely associated with the Socialist Party of Austria (SPÖ).

The 1981 IKG elections were the turning point in Vienna’s Jewish leadership. They marked the end of the era of undisputed loyalty of the community board and leadership to their ideological counterparts in the Austrian party spectrum, and the first time that a non-*Alt-Wiener* (Ivan Hacker) became IKG president and that members of the post-*Shoah* generation joined the IKG leadership (Ariel Muzicant was elected vice-president). It also brought a change into the IKG’s religious attitude, as more observant Jews were elected into its leadership. Subsequent elections continued reflecting the community’s demographic

developments. Thus, the 1985 elections marked the entry of Sephardi Jews into the leadership. The 1998 elections marked the first time that someone born after 1945 (Muzicant) became president. In the 2007 elections, the Sephardic-Bukhara party placed second, and a party founded by second-generation post-*Shoah* activists entered IKG politics. In the 2012 elections, Oskar Deutsch became the first IKG president born in post-*Shoah* Vienna, and, as an observant Jew, he is the first postwar president to always wear a kippa when representing the Jewish community. The Sephardic-Bukhara party came in second again, but this time with only one mandate less than the leading party (Atid). In all, the Sephardic lists significantly gained in strength, and, for the first time in IKG history, two Sephardic Jews, one Bukharan and one Georgian, were elected vice-presidents.

## From “Sitting on Packed Suitcases” to “Feeling at Home”

Until the late 1970s, community leaders felt more at home in Austria than the Jewish population at large. The *Alt-Wiener* Jews in general, and the community leadership in particular, adopted a more conciliatory attitude toward Austria than did the DPs and refugees, and tended toward greater social integration, cultivated contacts with local politicians, and insisted that they were in Austria to stay.<sup>11</sup>

The DPs and refugees, who fled postwar anti-Semitism and pogroms in their home countries, came to Austria because they perceived it to

be a safe haven; nevertheless they felt that they were “sitting on packed suitcases.” They saw their sojourn there as a “happenstance of war,” not as an intentional act. Indeed, they did not envision their future there but simply stayed in the meantime for a variety of personal reasons. The Austrian *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) enabled them to lead comfortable lives. But all Jewish life and celebrations took place behind closed doors. The Jews did not want to attract attention. They lived in two worlds: the outside world, which included the workplace, where they were obliged to maintain contact with people they either feared, despised, or did not trust; and the internal Jewish world, the world of family and friends. Yet nonetheless they stayed and went on with their daily lives. Indicative of their attitude toward Jewish life in Vienna was their general unwillingness to donate funds for the re-establishment of local Jewish community institutions, while contributing generously to the State of Israel. Similarly, most Jews sought to avoid occupations and lifestyles that entailed a long-term commitment to Austria.

The members of the postwar generation gradually felt more and more comfortable in their Viennese surrounding. Buoyed by Israel’s victory in the Six-Day War, they developed self-confidence as Jews significantly stronger than that of their parents. They felt more secure and more accepted by their environment and displayed their Jewishness more openly. Moreover, having grown up in Vienna and been exposed to the local society and culture, they had formed friendly relations with gentiles and, after the 1970s, began to look ahead toward a possible future there.

Since the 1980s, it has become clear that the postwar Jews have actually “unpacked their suitcases.” They increasingly felt that “we are here to stay” and actively participated in Vienna’s economic and social life. The postwar generation also adopted a much more outspoken public stance. They vent their discontent openly rather than behind closed doors, stand up for their rights in public, bring their issues and concerns out onto the streets, and seek media publicity. They do not shy away from criticizing Austrian politicians and filing official complaints and lawsuits against individuals and groups in order to safeguard the Austrian Jews’ safety, interests, and religious freedom. Moreover, although they had difficulties defining it, they also began to envisage and discuss the adoption of an Austrian identity, an issue that had earlier been taboo and unthinkable. The second and third postwar generations have evinced even stronger Austrian identities and displayed their Jewishness more openly than their previous generations – including wearing kippot in public.

From the onset, the Soviet immigrants maintained a more positive attitude toward Austria than the local Jews. They came to stay. Those who arrived as small children and the post-immigration generation studied German-language literature and culture in school, and mastery of the language enabled them to integrate successfully into Viennese society.

## External Representation – Changing Relationship with the Gentile Surroundings

These developments also influenced IKG elections, and thus, the IKG's external representation. The new IKG leadership elected in 1981 publicly distanced itself from the SPÖ and the BWJ's non-confrontational and partisan positions, and each consecutive leadership showed greater outspokenness and readiness for public exposure. In the ensuing years, the IKG challenged extreme

right wing leader Jörg Haider in court and got the state to recognize the authorities' responsibilities to protect Jewish religious life.

**Anti-semitism, which on occasion is disguised as Anti-Zionism, is propagated by the extreme Right, the extreme Left and the Islamists**

Both Muzicant and Deutsch also take a self-confident stance toward world Jewry in general and Israel in particular, a stance that would have been unimaginable among their predecessors.

Thus, they stood up

to WJC president Ronald Lauder's attempts to interfere in the 2012 communal presidential elections, and fought against the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem for the return of the Vienna Jewish community's collection (2011-2015).<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the Jewish community publicly opposes and criticizes any generalized and undifferentiated foreign criticism

directed at Austria, such as Israeli immigration absorption minister Yuli Tamir's call (2000) for the "Austrian Jews living under persecution" to make aliyah<sup>13</sup>.

The IKG leadership also fights anti-Semitism publicly and forthrightly. Today, the Jewish community is confronted with anti-Semitism – sometimes disguised as anti-Zionism – propagated by the extreme right, the radical left, Islamists, and also not-so-radical Muslims. The IKG is constantly monitoring anti-Semitic incidents, reporting them to the Austrian authorities, filing complaints with the Public Prosecution Service, and publishing and condemning them in the Austrian media. The IKG also set up its own security department, which cooperates closely with the national police.

## Restitution

Developments within the IKG leadership are best illustrated by its battle for restitution. Until the late 1980s, IKG leaders conducted restitution negotiations quietly so as not to arouse anti-Semitism. Grosz was the first IKG president to publicly claim restitution. He publicly campaigned for the rights of the robbed victims. After an extensive campaign, the Austrian and provincial governments agreed to pay 18.1 million Euro, to return or compensate for confiscated real estate and art objects.

## Changes in the Austrian Shoah Introspection

The 1980s were also a turning point in the Austrian political and social attitudes toward the Jewish community. After World War II, Austria defined itself as the “first victim” of Nazi Germany. For the Austrian government and the population, this self-definition served to clear them of any guilt or responsibility. The politicians and the population did not deal with Austria’s role in the *Shoah*. Thus, prejudice, the previous pattern of anti-Semitism, and contempt for Jews in the public and political spheres continued to prevail. Austria did not actively support the re-establishment of Jewish life in the country, and Austrian Jews who had fled the Nazi onslaught were explicitly discouraged from returning because the Austrian politicians wanted to protect those who had appropriated Jewish property.

Only in the mid-1980s, did the Austrian population begin to face up to its past. The Waldheim affair (1986) triggered a new public discourse on the role of Austrians in the *Shoah*, and in 1991 Franz Vranitzky was the first Chancellor to openly challenge the “first victim” myth, admitting publicly that many Austrians had been part of the Nazi murder machinery. Consequently, Austria’s policies became characterized by a willingness to deal with its responsibility in the *Shoah* and by substantial financial support for communal projects to enhance Jewish life and infrastructure. The federal government and municipal authorities sought to improve relations with Austrian Jews, world Jewry, and Israel.

## Jewish Group Identity

The process of “feeling at home in Vienna” which has been underway since the late 1970s, and increasingly visible since the early 1980s led to changes in the components of Jewish identity. Each successive generation accorded diminishing weight to the memory of the *Shoah* (which had formed a virtual wall between the Jewish and the local population) and to their bonds with the State of Israel (which had served as a substitute for an Austrian identity) in their group identity, developing both a stronger relationship to Austria, and greater self-confidence as Jews in Vienna than the previous generation.

Israel was a utopia for the survivors. For the first postwar generation, it was the symbol for the Jewish survival, and many of those who remained behind in Europe continued to entertain dreams of making Aliyah. Jews generally stood behind Israel unconditionally, irrespective of their objections to Israeli government policies. While the Jewish state occupies an important place in the hearts of the second postwar generation, they openly criticize the Israeli government’s policies – though not the existence of the state. Israel is being largely taken for granted by this generation, and Austrian media, which generally portrays

**The leadership of the Jewish community in Vienna recognized the specific needs of the immigrants from the FSU who make up about half of the community**

Israel as the aggressor, influences the opinions and attitudes of both the gentiles and the Jews. It needs to be stressed that the State of Israel does not make significant efforts to change these opinions. The Israeli embassy makes only minimal efforts to give the Jewish community an understanding of the social, economic, and political developments in Israel. It does little *hasbara* among the community members. In the words of a former ambassador: "I am not accredited to the Jewish community, but the Austrian government." While this is technically true, closer contact between the embassy and the community (not only its leadership) would surely contribute to a strengthening of the centrality of Israel in Jewish group identity, and also provide the Jews with information necessary to fight anti-Zionism and the ignorance concerning Israel in their surroundings.

Both the *Shoah* memory and the State of Israel had been major binding links between the various groups within the community during the first four decades after World War II. Their declining centrality left a vacuum in Jewish group identity, which was filled by religion. The postwar generation's contribution to the process of forming Jewish identity was boosting the self-confidence and creating the institutions necessary for a flourishing Jewish life. The second postwar generation is now infusing that process with renewed involvement in Judaism as a religion, a new and broader conception of Jewish identity, and the reinforcement and public expression of Jewish self-confidence. Having grown up in a secure economic environment and in a Jewish community with the required infrastructure,

they began to examine their Jewish identity in depth, to promote the study of Judaism, and to encourage youth participation and commitment, as evidenced by the increased number of learning venues and the tendency toward greater personal religiosity. Also those who remain less observant are actively participating in activities organized by the community and the various Jewish organizations in Vienna. These organizations are almost exclusively Orthodox, but heterogeneous in their level of observance. Thus, for example, among the youth organizations there is the secular Zionist *Shomer Hatzair*, the religious Zionist *Bnei Akiva*, the Bukhara youth organization *Yad BeYad*, and the Jewish students' organization.

## Infrastructure and Jewish Life

Religious orientation within the community has strengthened with each successive generation, and since the 1981 communal elections this trend is also reflected in the communal leadership. This, together with the increased sense of having settled, led to a marked expansion of communal infrastructure and a more vital Jewish life. From the 1980s educational institutions for the general community have started to open.

Reflecting Vienna Jewry's Orthodox orientation, cultural pluralism and increased interest in Judaism, Vienna's Jewish infrastructure today includes 18 synagogues and prayer rooms, five Jewish elementary and high schools, Talmud-Torah schools, the Vienna Yeshiva, a Jewish business school (the Lauder Business School is the first and only Jewish university in continental Europe),

a Jewish Vocational Training Center, a Jewish teachers' training academy, and other educational institutions. There is also a center for Jewish arts and music, a community center, the Sephardi Center, two ritual baths, the Ezra psycho-social center, a retirement home, an extensive kosher infrastructure (11 restaurants, 10 supermarkets and bakeries, 4 butchers), five *kashrut* authorities, and an *eruv*.

Together with establishing Jewish infrastructure, the IKG also began to open up toward the general Austrian population. It put increasing weight on informing the Austrian population about Judaism, showing them Jewish life in Vienna, and stressing the role of Vienna's Jewish community in Austrian cultural life. It established the Jewish Institute for Adult Education (1989), which caters mainly to a non-Jewish audience.

## Conclusion

The Vienna (and thus the Austrian) Jewish community is small. And while its majority is not strictly observant, it has developed a strong Orthodox religious group identity. Therefore, after the decline of the centrality of memory of the *Shoah* and the State of Israel as binding agents informing Jewish group identity, religion now fills the gap. Due to this, Vienna has today a united and flourishing community, which is constantly developing with regard to kosher infrastructure, educational institutions and cultural offerings. The community has become more secure in expressing its Jewish identity while, at the same time, has become better integrated into Austrian society.

## Endnotes

1 The principle of the Jewish *Einheitsgemeinde* was enforced by the state, which recognized only one Jewish community in each city - by virtue of the Austrian *Gesetz vom 21. März 1890, betreffend die Regelung der äußeren Rechtsverhältnisse der israelitischen Religionsgesellschaft* (legislation regulating the relations between the state and the Israelite Religion Corporation of March 21, 1890, RGBl. Nr. 57/1890, Israelitengesetz).

2 "old-Viennese Jews": Jews who already before the war had been Viennese by culture, identity, and citizenship

3 Estimated numbers for this immigration waves are not available.

4 The Jews from Central Asia and the Caucasus lived in remote and less urbanized areas, where Soviet rule was weaker, and thus had been spared to a very high extent from the Soviet assimilatory policy and never had a communist orientation. Therefore, they managed to keep many of their ethnic and religious (Orthodox) traditions and did not try to assimilate into the atheistic mainstream. This stands in contrast to the Jews from the European Soviet Union, who had been strongly subjected to the Soviet assimilatory policy, and thus were generally stripped of knowledge of the Jewish religion and tradition (see: Alexander Friedmann, "Psycho-Socio-Cultural Rehabilitation in an Ethnic Subgroup: A 30-Year Follow-Up," *World Cultural Psychiatry Research Review* 2, (April-July 2007): 89; Larissa Remennick, *Russian Jews on Three Continents: Identity, Integration, and Conflict* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), p.18.)

5 Or Chadasch has only some 150 members, not all of whom are halachically Jewish.

6 According to different estimates, there are between 9.000 and 20.000 Jews in Vienna.

7 IKG *Mitgliederservice, Mitglieder: Anzahl Nach Alter* – Stand 28.07.2016 (private communication, 2016).

8 *Zentralwohlfahrtstelle, Mitgliederstatistik der jüdischen*

*Gemeinden und Landesverbände in Deutschland für das Jahr 2015 (Frankfurt am Main: Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland, 2016).*

9 Information received per e-mail (July 28, 2016) from the IKG Member Service, and confirmed by the IKG Rabbinate.

10 In the first eight years after World War II, the IKG leadership changed eight times, with six leaders who represented three ideologically diverse political lists (communist, Zionist, and socialist).

11 IKG president Ernst Feldsberg's statement that he "could not imagine any other country as his homeland

even after 1945" (*Helga Embacher, Neubeginn ohne Illusionen: Juden in Österreich nach 1945* (Vienna: Picus, 1995), p. 169) was typical of the *Alt-Wiener* Jews, but it was not shared by the general Jewish population.

12 For detailed information on both, see: Susanne Cohen-Weisz, *Jewish Life in Austria and Germany since 1945: Identity and Communal Reconstruction* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016), pp.273-276.

13 Anton Legerer, "Allgemeine Besorgnis auch unter den Juden: Österreichs Juden in der Doppelmühle," *haGalil onLine*, February 14, 2000. <http://www.hagalil.com/archiv/2000/02/austria-4.htm>, accessed July 19, 2016.

## The Jewish Community in Turkey

Throughout its long history, the Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire and in the Turkish Republic has had a strong symbolic dimension. The significant migration of Spanish Jews to the Ottoman Empire, after the Sultan issued a formal invitation in 1492, has often been seen as an example of Ottoman tolerance, and of the better treatment of Jews in Muslim countries rather than in Christian states. With the proclamation of the Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkish Jews were the first ever to be granted full citizenship by a Muslim State. Even today, the Jewish community in Turkey is the largest in the Muslim world. However, despite these more positive facts, Turkey's Jews today face numerous challenges; some analysts speak of a "dying community."

There are currently between 15,000 and 18,000 Jews in Turkey (among a population of 79 million). They are mainly centered in two cities: Istanbul (14,000 – 17,000) and Izmir (1,000 - 1,500). Five percent of the community is Ashkenazi, the remaining 95 percent is mostly Sephardic.

Since the 1948-1951 Aliyah wave, when 40 percent of the community left for Israel, the number of Jews living in Turkey has steadily decreased due to:

- A negative demographic balance (deaths have outnumbered births since the 1960s ). The most recent statistics available on the community date all the way back to 2001 and 1988, but they still provide important information. In 1988, 40 percent of heads of Turkish Jewish families were more than 50

years old. Since then, the situation has even worsened. In 2001, there were 124 births, 100 Bnei Mitzvah, 67 marriages, and 220 deaths. In the same year, the estimated fertility rate was 1.6, well below replacement rates. All these factors point to the difficult demographic situation of an ageing community.

- A high rate of intermarriage (around 40 percent).
- Emigration (Between 1952 and 2012, 28,454 made Aliyah, to which must be added emigration to other countries).

**Whereas Ladino and French were widespread at the dawn of the Twentieth century, Turkish is today the mother tongue of the vast majority of Turkish Jews**

The Jews living in Turkey today generally hold high-salaried occupations (the poorer part of the community having left between 1948 and 1951), mostly as traders- or businesspeople, independent or liberal professionals, or academics. But a less prosperous group still exists in the community.

Socially and culturally speaking, the Jewish community is strongly integrated into Turkish society. In 1925, the heads of the community renounced the rights, privileges, and protections granted to them under the Lausanne treaty, choosing Turkish citizenship instead, which was conferred to them along with full equality to their Muslim fellow citizens. Even though there are some places where Turkish Jews prefer to live, there

are no Jewish neighborhoods as such in Turkey. All Turkish Jews live in Muslim majority communities. Most young Jews attend Turkish secular schools, but even the Ulus Jewish School in Istanbul must conform to the general Turkish curriculum. Jewish content is limited to a few hours a week, and Hebrew is taught as a foreign language like English or French. The results of this intense Turcification of the community can be seen in the Turkish Jews' linguistic situation. Whereas Ladino and French were widespread at the dawn of the 20th century, the intensive campaign by the Turkish government, as well as the integration policy pursued by the community itself, led to a steep decline of these languages in favor of Turkish, which is now the mother tongue of the vast majority of Turkish Jews. In this context, the high rate of intermarriage is no surprise. In Turkey, intermarriages are in their vast majority between a Muslim man and a Jewish woman (even if the Republic has officially adopted a civil code inspired by Swiss law, the remaining influence of Islamic matrimonial law regarding unions between a Muslim and a dhimmi still makes marriages between a Jewish man and a Muslim woman less accepted), the rabbinate refuses to perform conversions, and the state identifies its citizens according to the religion of their father. Therefore, the effects of intermarriage in Turkey are particularly strong since the children of such homes, although Jewish according to Halacha, are raised in a Muslim (although generally quite secular) culture. For all these reasons, the Jewish community in Turkey strongly identifies itself with the rest of the Turkish society.

There are 20 active synagogues in Turkey, three of

them are only open in summer; all are under the control of the Turkish Rabbinate , which is led by a chief rabbi (*Hahambaşı*). The community also has a Beit Din and a secular council of 50 co-opted members whose task is to help the *Hahambaşı* . There is a Chabad representative in Istanbul. He was first seen as an interloper by the Turkish Jews as he was a foreigner, Ashkenazi, and more strictly Orthodox than the local rabbis, but he managed to adapt himself to the community and now works, in Turkish, in close cooperation with the local Jewish authorities.

The Jewish community also runs a school in Istanbul and two hospitals (one in Izmir and one in Istanbul) as well as several active cultural organizations. Turkish Jews publish their own newspaper, *Şalom*. International Jewish organizations are also present in Turkey, where there are three JCCs (two in Istanbul, one in Izmir), an influential Bnai Brith , and a vibrant Limmud.

Although official relations between the Jewish community and the state are good, the tiny community has little electoral weight. Turkish Jews rely on the government, which not only provides security for the community, but also, among other things, owns the country's synagogues. The officials of the Jewish community have therefore adopted a low profile, and, since the 1990s and the creation of the 500<sup>th</sup> *Yıl Vakfı* (The 500<sup>th</sup> year foundation), an institution founded in 1989 to celebrate Selim II's invitation to the Sephardic Jews, the latter's arrival to the Ottoman empire, and the "500<sup>th</sup> years of tolerance" binding the two people. It is still active today, runs the Jewish Museum in Istanbul, and is responsible for the community's official

historical and political discourse). Taking care of the community has a symbolic importance for the Turkish authorities in their relations with the EU and the United States. The Jewish community leaders have been engaged in supporting the Turkish government in Europe (EU joining process) and in the U.S. (against the recognition of the Armenian genocide), while maintaining relations at home as best as possible. Since its assumption of power in 2012, Erdoğan's government has regularly publicly expressed its will to protect its Jewish minority, while the community has maintained its pro-governmental line, even against Israel during the Mavi Marmara incident. During the July 15, 2016 coup attempt, the community published a statement in support of the AKP government, and is presently raising money for the "martyrs of July 15<sup>th</sup>". On August 7<sup>th</sup>, the Turkish government organized a huge rally to celebrate the "democratization" of the country. Not only did the *Hahambaşı* and the head of the association of Turks living in Israel appear at the event alongside AKP officials, but the Turkish Jewish Community also sent a letter to the American Conference of Presidents inviting them to join in demonstrating support to the Turkish government. All of these last events are fully in the continuity of the traditional domestic and international political

**The security deterioration in Turkey in the wake of PKK and ISIS attacks have created the expectation of increased Aliyah**

position of the Turkish Jewish community. However, even if these official statements may give the impression that the community is entirely pro-government, Turkish Jews have actually no other choice than to publicly support the government, whatever it may be, to survive. Behind the scenes, their feelings are more nuanced, and the latest developments in Turkey have aroused some serious concerns among the Jewish community.

## Aliyah from Turkey

In 2015, 105 Turkish Jews made Aliyah, which is higher than in 2014 (59) or 2013 (71) but quite similar to the years between 2000 and 2012 (an average 102 per year). This number is relatively high compared to the size of the community, and will likely be even higher for 2016. As of July 2016, 75 people have made Aliyah this year, which represents an increase of around 200 percent over the same period last year.

Analysis of Turkish Aliyah shows that push factors are more important than pull factors. Historically, rises in Aliyah always coincide with Turkish domestic events. These push factors include:

- General insecurity: domestic instability and threats in Turkey play an important role in the Aliyah of Turkish Jews. Last year saw a sharp security deterioration with the Turkish government now facing two main threats: intensified fighting with the PKK since summer 2015, along with simultaneously ISIS attacks, which have claimed numerous lives (Suruç, Ankara, Istanbul airport). Recent developments in Turkish politics

may increase feelings of insecurity among Turkish population as both the coup and the consecutive purges by the AKP government have substantially weakened the army and the security forces, which may lead to increased attacks in the country.

- Anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism: In the last 30 years, Turkish Jews have suffered several attacks, beginning with the 1986 Neve Şalom synagogue bombing, and reaching a peak with the 2003 bombing of two synagogues in Istanbul. In the aftermath of these attacks, the community became one of the most “securitized” in the world. Turkish media and politicians are almost unanimously anti-Israel, in ways more freely and more violently expressed than in Europe. Anti-Semitism is widespread (about 70 percent of the population has anti-Semitic feelings), and often publicly expressed. Recent developments in the country have been ambiguous. On one side, Erdoğan signed an agreement with Israel in June 2015, which could lower the level of anti-Israeli attacks from the Islamic groups close to the AKP. On the other side however, the political purge currently underway in Turkey is freeing the government from the last of the Kemalists, and from the influence of the moderate Islamist Gülen Confrery, which may open more space for hard line (and more anti-Semitic) Islamists. Moreover, Turkey's protracted and far from certain accession process into the EU could also weaken the position of the Jewish community, whose main card in its relations

with the Turkish government is its support of the latter's European aspirations.

- Socio-economic limitations: Although the Jews in Turkey officially enjoy full equality of rights with their fellow Muslim citizens, they must deal with several un-official limitations. Turkish Jews are precluded from civil service jobs, command posts in the army, and political careers. Moreover, the rise of a Turkish Muslim middle and higher class creates a stronger competition for Jewish businessmen whose position is commensurately weakening.

In light of these push factors, Aliyah is increasingly attractive to Turkey's Jews. One should also add that Turkish olim have maintained strong ties with Turkey and their relatives there, which has created a solidarity network for new immigrants from Turkey.

At the same time, certain factors are impeding immigration to Israel:

- Demographics: The Turkish community is an ageing population, and its more and more numerous elderly members prefer not to face the difficulties of making Aliyah.
- Integration: Turkey's Jews are well integrated in the Turkish society. Economically speaking, a majority of Jews currently run successful businesses in Turkey. Moreover, the effects of almost a century of Turkish secular nationalism has had an influence on the country's Jews who share strong Turkish nationalist feelings and are very secular (the most religious part of the community having left in 1948-1951).

This, along with numerous intermarriages, has created a situation in which Turkish Jews have stronger ties to Turkey than to Israel. There are, for example, only two Hebrew-language courses available in Turkey, and attempts to open additional ones have failed due to lack of interest.

- The public loyalty of the community, which is expressed by the *500<sup>th</sup> Yil Vakfı*, and by the heads of the community assertions that the Jews of Turkey live perfectly peaceful lives. Even if the feelings of the local Jews are quite different, Jewish officials continuously deny the threats the community is facing, and, in order to show their loyalty to the Turkish State, do not publicly support Aliyah.
- For Turkish Jews interested in emigration, Israel is only one possible destination, and apparently not the most attractive one since many more prefer to settle in Europe or in the United States.

Finally, the authoritative turn of the Turkish government following the attempted coup, and the drastic changes in the country's political structure that are resulting from this turn of events will not reverse the trends described here regarding the Turkish Jewish community. Their chief effect will be to increase the number of Jews leaving the country for Israel or other places. This, in turn, will intensify the steady demographic decline that has taken place since World War II. Not much can be done to change this. The community is well organized and already has all the institutions that could mitigate these trends at

its disposal, but which have proved to be of limited efficacy. The Israeli government could, however, do two things. First, it should try to attract the Jews who want to leave Turkey toward Israel rather than other countries. Given the sensibility of the Turkish society and the pressure on the Jewish community as far as Israel is concerned, such an attempt should be made cautiously and discreetly as possible, preferably with the help of the existing associations of Turkish olim; Israel should expect no help from local community officials. Second,

the evolution of Turkish-Israeli relations has an impact on the situation of Turkish Jews. The better these relations are, the easier it is for the Jewish community to be in accordance with the Turkish government's policy, to be accepted as Jews by the Turkish Muslim majority, and to consolidate the different aspects of their identity. In this sense, the Turkish-Israeli reconciliation will have significant positive effects for the Turkish Jewish community, and its value as such must also be taken into consideration in Jerusalem.

# Main Publications of the Jewish People Policy Institute

**A Statecraft-Security Israeli-Jewish View Of The Chief-Of-Staff's Document "Israel Defense Forces Strategy"**, Prof. Yehezkle Dror, January 2016

**Jewish Solidarity in an Age of Polarization**, Background Policy Documents prepared in advance of JPPI's 2015 Brainstorming Conference, May 18-19, 2015, Glen Cove, NY

**Jewish Values and Israel's Use of Force in Armed Conflict: Perspectives from World Jewry**, Project Heads: Shmuel Rosner and Michael Herzog, 2015

**Annual Assessment 2013-2014, Executive Report No. 10**, with special in-depth chapters: South African Jewry 20 Years into Democracy; 1989-2014: Russian-Speaking Jews, 25 Years Later; Woman's Leadership in the American Organized Jewish Community; Crowd Sourced Genealogy and Direct-to-Consumer DNA Testing: Implications for the Jewish People; Project Head: Shlomo Fischer; JPPI staff and contributors, 2014.

**Jewish and Democratic: Perspectives from World Jewry**, Shmuel Rosner and Avi Gil, Project Heads, 2014

**Russian-Speaking Jews in North America**, Jonathan Sarna; **On Israelis Abroad**, Yogev Karasenty, 2014

**The Challenged Triangle: Washington, Jerusalem and the American Jewish Community; Israel: Jewish and Democratic: Background Policy Documents for JPPI's 2014 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People**, March 11-12, 2014, Glen Cove, NY

**Rise and Decline of Civilizations: Lessons for the Jewish People**, Shalom Salomon Wald, Foreword by Shimon Peres, Academic Studies Press, Boston, 2014; Yediot Books (Hebrew translation), Tel Aviv, 2013.

**Peoplehood and the Distancing Discourse**, Background Policy Documents prepared for JPPI's 2012 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People, JPPI Staff, 2012.

**The Challenge of Peoplehood: Strengthening the Attachment of Young American Jews to Israel in the Time of the Distancing Discourse**, Shmuel Rosner and Inbal Hakman, 2012.

**Policy Recommendations for Strengthening Jewish-Israeli Identity among Children of Israelis Abroad and their Attachment to the State of Israel and the Jewish Community**, Yogev Karasenty, 2012.

**Policy Paper: Absentee Voting Rights for Israelis Abroad**, Yogev Karasenty and Inbal Hakman, 2012.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Forces, Their Impacts on the Jewish People, Israel and the United States**, Stuart E. Eizenstat, Foreword by Martin Gilbert, 2012.

**Jewish Demographic Policies, Population Trends and Options in Israel and in the Diaspora**, Sergio DellaPergola, 2011.

**Mega-Trends and their Impact on the Jewish People**, Prepared for JPPI's 2010 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People, JPPI Staff, 2010.

**Toward 2030: Strategies for the Jewish Future, Background Documents for the 2010 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People**, JPPI Staff, 2010.

**2030: Alternative Futures for the Jewish People**, Project Directors: Avi Gil and Einat Wilf, 2010.

**The Triangular Relationship of Jerusalem, Washington and North American Jewry**, Background Documents for JPPI's 2009 Glen Cove Conference, JPPI Staff, 2009.

**Muslim Anti-Semitism: The Challenge and Possible Responses**, Emmanuel Sivan, 2009.

**Background Policy Documents for the Inaugural President's Conference: Facing Tomorrow**, JPPI Staff and Contributors, 2008.

**A Strategic Plan for the Strengthening of Jerusalem**, JPPI Staff, 2007.

**Background Policy Documents for the 2007 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People**, JPPI Staff, 2007.

**Annual Assessments 2004-2014.**

**Institut de Planification d'une Politique pour le Peuple Juif, Rapport Annuel du JPPI 2005/2006, Le Peuple Juif en 2005/2006, Entre Renaissance et Declin**, Special edition in French, JPPI Staff and Contributors, 2006.

**The Jewish People between Thriving and Decline, To succeed, large resources, judicious coping with critical decision and careful crafting of long-term grand-policies are needed.** The full volume contains analyses of the major communities around the world and in-depth assessments of significant topics. JPPI Staff and Contributors, 2005.

**China and the Jewish People: Old Civilizations in a New Era**, Shalom Salomon Wald, Strategy Paper, 2004. This is the first strategic document in the series: Improving the Standing of the Jewish People in Emerging Superpowers without a Biblical Tradition.

## About JPPI

The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) is an independent professional policy planning think tank incorporated as a private non-profit company in Israel. The mission of the Institute is to ensure the thriving of the Jewish people and the Jewish civilization by engaging in professional strategic thinking and planning on issues of primary concern to world Jewry. Located in Jerusalem, the concept of JPPI regarding the Jewish people is global, and includes aspects of major Jewish communities with Israel as one of them, at the core.

JPPI's activities are action-oriented, placing special emphasis on identifying critical options and analyzing their potential impact on the future. To this end, the Institute works toward developing professional strategic and long-term policy perspectives exploring key factors that may endanger or enhance the future of the Jewish People. JPPI provides professionals, decision-makers, and global leaders with:

- Surveys and analyses of key situations and dynamics
- "Alerts" to emerging opportunities and threats
- Assessment of important current events and anticipated developments
- Strategic action options and innovative alternatives
- Policy option analysis
- Agenda setting, policy recommendations, and work plan design

JPPI is unique in dealing with the future of the Jewish people as a whole within a methodological framework of study and policy development. Its independence is assured by its company articles, with a board of directors co-chaired by Ambassadors Stuart Eizenstat and Dennis Ross – both have served in the highest echelons of the U.S. government, and Leonid Nevzlin in Israel – and composed of individuals with significant policy experience. The board of directors also serves as the Institute's Professional Guiding Council.



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